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THE

CHRISTIAN

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THE CHRISTIAN IN THE WORLD.

By REV. D. W. FAUNCE.

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THE CHRISTIAN

IN

THE WORLD.

BY THE

REV. D. W. FAUNCE.

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TEMPTATION is the test of principles. Its resistance gives proof of their soundness and augments their strength. At all times the Christian has found himself tempted by surrounding forms and usages, and drawn into compromise with the general tone of the society in which he moves. Never, perhaps, was the temptation greater than in the present day to relax the high claims of Christianity and to merge its principles in conformity with the world. Not unfrequently perplexity arises, and the Christian is in peril of being seduced by the sophistry of circumstances, and drawn into an easy compliance with what is doubtful or ensnaring. To do as others do, when there seems no outward and flagrant violation of conventional habits and manners, is a form of temptation before which many have fallen, and have lost the simplicity that is in Christ and its accompanying

peace. This has often crippled Christianity, and brought a slur upon its principles and doctrines. Whatever, then, is done to vindicate the high tone of Christianity, and to enforce on its disciples the maintenance of its divine and ennobling principles, merits acceptance and encouragement always, at all times, and in every place. Such is the design of this volume. And from the felicity with which it discusses and enforces all vital questions of Christian character, profession, and duty, as well as from the high approbation it has met with in America, the publishers have been induced to issue an English edition. In doing so they cannot but feel that they render an essential service to all denominations of Christians in England, and trust not only that the book will have a circulation commensurate with its merits, but that the principles and practice it inculcates may be embodied in the life of its readers.

27, PATERNOSTER ROW,
March, 1875.

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THE CHRISTIAN IN THE WORLD.

I.

THE STATEMENT.

DUTY PRACTICABLE — DUTY POSITIVE — DUTY DEMANDED OF CHRISTIANS IN THE WORLD — DUTY DEMANDED OF BUSY MEN — DUTY DEMANDED IN AN EVIL WORLD — CONFUSION OF VARIOUS CLAIMS.

"A GOOD sermon that," said a man to his neighbour as they were leaving the church where they had listened to a sermon on the Christian duty of being "not conformed to this world." "Yes," replied the other, "it was a good sermon enough; but somehow these requirements of the Bible in that matter are impracticable for a man in business or in society. It was all right for *him* to speak as he has done; he is a minister of religion. But this thing cannot be carried out in practical life."

This man only said what many think. The sermon is to be heard, not done. The Bible, with its lofty standard of Christian living, is to be regarded with due reverence. Upon its wonderful word-paintings men are to gaze as travellers gaze upon the masterpieces in the Pitti Gallery or at the Vatican. Christianity is, of course, a system of truth,—pure, grand, and without a rival. But the things required in the Bible are sometimes regarded as very far

beyond what is to be actually expected of a Christian who is out in the world. There is often very little pressure as of immediate and positive duty in the presence of those texts that demand the highest forms of Christian living. So some practical engineer looks upon the beautiful lines on the tinted paper of the draughtsman. The machine appears well in the picture; everything is perfectly drawn. Here and there he finds, in the details, what he calls a "capital thought;" but to his practised eye the draughted machine so beautifully depicted on that tinted paper will not work. Hints it contains that are worthy of praise; but as a contrivance for doing a certain work, it is a failure. He declines to build the machine from those plans; the thing proposed cannot, he says, be done in that way. He may decide that, in the present state of mechanical science, it cannot be done at all.

There are men who insist that the Sermon on the Mount is *teleological*, — *i.e.*, that it describes an *end* to be sought; an end possible of attainment only in the more perfect ages of the world. According to this view it binds us, but only proximately; it will be fully practicable to obey it further on in a riper and more Christian state of society. Meanwhile, a tolerable conformity to its requirements is the practical standard for us.

But many would hesitate at this; they are unwilling to put a carnal discount on the commands of the Master. They see very clearly that this theory of interpreting the Bible would soil every precept, and would leave the words of Jesus about any practical duty with just as much or as little of meaning and of obligation as any man should choose to assign them. Nor could this vitiating process stop with the precepts of the Bible; it must be applied to its doctrinal teachings as well. In that case, its most direct statements of truth must be read in the light of the

supposed capacity of any age or any individual to take them and use them for present profit. The truth to a man, in that case, would be whatever of Christ's words a man can accept as true. It would be only the coming man in the coming age who would be able or under obligation to take up and believe all our Lord's words. This principle once admitted, our Bible as now written would be so unlike the Bible which we ought to practice, that there could be no irreverence in rewriting the Sacred Volume; and this "new version," setting forth our duty in this present age, would be our practical Bible to be consulted and obeyed, while that we now have would be only our theoretic Bible. But all this cannot be; there must be some mistake in the process when such is the product. Words are quantities that God weighs as accurately as He weighs the atoms wherewith He balances the worlds. Jesus spoke not to angels, but to men of like passions with ourselves.

Abandoning the teleological view as untenable, we meet another view,—that of the *Orientalism*—in these Biblical commands to a holy life. The precepts about unworldliness, the injunctions to "turn the other cheek also," to "resist not evil," it is proposed to consider merely as instances of Oriental extravagance in speech. They are to be toned down; we are to repaint them in neutral tints, that we may be able to judge of the picture with our cooler Occidental eye. It is alleged, sometimes, that the Sermon on the Mount, obeyed in Boston or New York or London, would bring any merchant in a week to the edge of bankruptcy; that, obeyed in any town or city, it would unhinge all society; that, since the difference between civilized and savage life is mainly in the fact that the one is provident for the future and the other is not, if society should obey the literal command to take no

thought for the morrow, it would relapse into barbarism. It is therefore claimed that we must look upon the lofty standard of the New Testament as upon some overdrawn picture,—the necessity for the overdrawing to be found in the character of the age in which it appeared. But what shall be said of the words of the Apostle Paul in which Christians are told, "be ye not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed"? There is no Eastern figure here. Nor can any tropical luxuriance be claimed for his words in this requirement. This, at least, is the plain prose of a simple command; and yet it goes as far as anything in the Sermon on the Mount. The truth is, this theory of Oriental extravagance is quite as dangerous as the alleged teleological usage. The mere comparison may be Oriental in form; the setting of the gem may be antique; but the gem is not the setting. The duty of Christian living is for all men and for all time. In some way these commands are binding. Obedience is possible. We may not carry our moistened sponge over the tablets of God's commands and then bind ourselves only by the half-legible lines that remain. Our work is not to bring down God's word to men, but to bring men up to it. What is due is to be done. There must be first an honest interpretation, and then an honest obedience to the texts which set forth the duty of a Christian who is to live among men. These texts are too many to be overlooked. The importance to religion itself—not now to urge its importance to one's own welfare—of a high type of Christian living is such and so great, that we are not surprised at the prominence given to this matter in the Scriptures. The texts enforcing this duty are confined to no one book of the Bible. It is declared alike in the historical and the prophetic books; in the cadences of poetry and the terseness of proverb; in the artless story

of the four Gospels, the narrative of the Acts, and the sublime unfoldings of the Revelation. Only a few of these texts need to be quoted. Let the few suggest the many.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind: and thy neighbour as thyself."

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

"And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing."

"But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."

"But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."

"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

"Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."

"And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also."

"Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another."

"I have showed you all things, how that so labouring

ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."

"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."

"For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

"And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity."

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

"Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which s evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord."

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

"And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour."

"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps."

"See then that yé walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise."

It will be perceived that these calls to holy living are not addressed to monks and nuns. The Christian is *in the world.* Society has its claims, and business its duties. Art asks attention to her treasures, learning beckons the student to her retreats, and discovery startles our wonder and enlarges our knowledge of the world that God has made. One must know something of all these things. A man has even less right to be a hermit in society than in a cell. Each man has also his own calling,—his trade, his business, his profession,—in which he owes it to himself and to that calling to be a master. Besides this, there is the general knowledge of the world's progress which no man may safely neglect. Nor could he neglect it if he would. The story of what men are doing in every clime is spread out each day at a man's breakfast-table in the newspaper. One must keep abreast of his age. To do it is no easy matter. He must "know the time" if he would serve God in his day and generation. That Christian made a serious mistake who refused to read anything save his Bible. And his neighbour was nearer the right who, first reading God's Word, laid it aside and took up the newspaper, saying, "Now let me see how God is governing His world, and which of His promises He is fulfilling among the nations to-day." And yet without the utmost care, the very rush and whirl of these things will overpower one. They will leave him little time for anything else as he allows himself to become interested in them. A man easily gets to be a sort of a sponge,

absorbing the news of the day; the multitudinous things that arrest his attention taking all the energy of his life and filling all his earthly being.

Then, too, the world is an *evil* as well as a busy world. Its tone is not Christian. To state the case very mildly, the world is no friend to grace. Things innocent are not always as innocent as they seem. They come wrapped about in an atmosphere of evil. The customs, maxims, spirit of the world, are not of the Father. The evil is disguised. The ugly features are hidden, often, behind the silver veil. Sin is covert, stealthy, plausible. Satan is far too skilled a tempter to show the cloven foot. He never says, "I am Satan; I am about to tempt; therefore have a care." He is an angel of light in guise and in tone. Men never go straightforward down to evident ruin. They go sideways, with one eye back on the right. The road to ruin lies always through the valley of deceit. And yet in such a world as this, amid these ten thousand hindrances, the Master calls us to undertake the task of being Christians, and He sets forth before us not only the perfect commands of a holy law, but the perfect model of His own sinless life.

As if to make this confusion more confounding for us in any decision about our duty, there is another and an antagonistic element. Side by side with the kingdom of evil there is established the kingdom of God. There are holy as well as unholy influences at work. Millions have felt the touch of a higher life. Through the sin-dried veins of their nature a new and healing tide has come to flow. The withered and shrivelled soul has begun to swell out into fairer proportions. The divine life has come to them. And though the old struggles in them with the new, there is work of the noblest kind to which the better nature prompts them. This is the age of

philanthropy; nay of philanthropic enterprise. The broadest Christian charities are now not only projected wisely, but are as diligently worked. These outreached hands of Christian men and women are extended towards the whole race. They are giving men everywhere the Bible and the school-book. Such enterprises claim our prayer, our sympathy, our money. Never was it possible to do so much good as now. Never could a man touch so many men before. The clipper ship of twenty-five years since has given place to the swift steamer; and the steamer to the telegraph. The nations are no longer separated. Man's words go flashing through the seas and across the continents. The air, the earth, the ocean, are vocal as man everywhere speaks to man. Can we wonder that devout men, when they see God thus gathering the nations, as of old He gathered them under Roman rule, in preparation for the advent of His Son, are looking on with expectant eye; that some of them are asking what these things mean, and whether they do not betoken the speedy conversion of the world and the speedy second coming of Christ?

But, be that as it may, this is true: that our sphere of religious activity is broadened, and the Christian who lives in this nineteenth century has need to be intensely active in the grand enterprises that are being pushed with vigour in obedience to the great commission of our Lord, —enterprises as broad as the world.

See, then, where the Christian stands. Influences from beneath and from above engird him. This world and the other both urge their claims. Society, business, recreations, literature, the arts, the news of the day, the duties of citizenship, the claims of the family, the tempting world, the stealthy evil, the ripe questions of reform, the duties of private devotion and of public worship, the

demands of benevolent enterprise in its hundred forms —these things all utter at one and the same time their multitudinous voices until the earnest heart is confused, baffled, and perplexed. May one do this thing, or only that? Some good men say yea, and some as good, say nay. May one engage in that or the other kind of business? read this or that class of books? attend the theatre or only the opera, or go to neither? play this or the other game? what time spend in social life, and what time devote to prayer? What style of living shall a Christian adopt, and how much may he spend on dress and furnishing? and, since no man lives on the bare necessities of life, what luxuries may he rightfully enjoy? What shall he spend on himself, and what shall he give to others? What is his duty in the matter of benevolence? and, out of the myriad forms that open themselves to his view, which shall he select as God's steward? Is it then an easy thing to be a Christian in such a world as this? A man seems to be sometimes in one of those old Roman labyrinths where dark and narrow passages open to him on every side, and he must choose among them. And how great the danger of a wrong choice! But we are sure that if the labyrinth is perplexing it is not so on purpose for our misleading. The danger of mistake is only for the quickening of our vigilance. There is a clue. It is ours to find and follow it. For, louder than the loudest din of this worldly Babel, sounding clearer than all its confused noises, is the voice of the Master calling us unto holy living. He calls us first to go aside with Him. He asks us to come apart from men, that in the "still hour" of devotion we may learn His will. And then when one has had audience with Christ, he may go out of the closet into active life, divinely taught how to be a *Christian in the world.*

II.

THE METHOD.

SCRIPTURAL STATEMENT OF MORAL LAW—SCRIPTURAL METHOD OF CASUISTRY — SCRIPTURAL METHOD OF BIOGRAPHY — SCRIPTURAL METHOD OF PRINCIPLES.

IT is the first step towards a higher style of Christian living when a man honestly desires to know the full measure of his duty. We refer him directly to God's Word; we ask his careful attention, if he would be a "Christian in the world," to those texts of Scripture already quoted (see pages 5–7), and to the multitude of similar directions to be found in every part of the Sacred Volume.

There is a story of a certain infidel, who, persuaded to read his neglected Bible, opened the book carelessly and half contemptuously. His eye fell first upon the ten commandments, as recorded in Exodus xx. He read them; he was amazed at their comprehensiveness; there was nothing to be taken away; there was nothing to be added; they were absolutely perfect; there was no possible duty that they did not cover. As the sunshine is the best evidence of the sun's existence, so the flash of this moral brightness proved instantly to him that the book which contained these commands was from God. And yet that which had so smitten him with moral conviction was simply and only the "clarity" and perfectness of one thing

in our religion,—the "clarity" and perfectness of *moral law*.

What is moral law? It is the bond that binds a moral being. What kind of a being is a moral being? He is a being capable of *moral action*,—action in view of what is right or wrong. Such a being is man. Moral law is, then, the original bond of duty towards God and his fellow-men. It binds man not as under one dispensation or another dispensation: not as having certain ritual duties at one time under the teaching of Abraham, at another time under Moses, at another time under Christ; but it binds man as man. It goes down below all dispensations; it discloses the duty of moral beings as such. It is the great original rule of righteousness for man as a being with reason, conscience, affections, and will,—a being who, because possessing those endowments, is a moral and responsible being.

One declaration of moral law was given on Sinai, the mountain aglow with flame and tremulous with thunder. The moral law was of course binding before the nascent nation of the Jews gathered solemnly its base to wait he return of Moses. Some law had bound Adam in the garden and Abraham in the land of promise. It must have been moral law. Upon that, as the only possible foundation for any special commandment, there was given to Adam the special duty concerning the fruit of the tree, and to Abraham the special duty of placing his son Isaac on the altar. Moral law binds every moral being whether before or after Sinai. In the Jewish version of it given on Sinai, there is no hint as of anything new. There is no definition as of things then first commanded. Law was then announced, not then enacted. Surely theft, covetousness, and murder, were not then for the first time made crimes, even for the Jewish nation! Nor is

there a hint of any *ceremony* in this version at Sinai. Ceremonies belong to separate dispensations, not to moral law. Moral law is universal. The ritual law—the law of the Levitical ceremonies—was given on another occasion and for a widely different purpose. That was to bind a particular nation for a definite time. But the law of Sinai was moral law. Summaries of moral law are also found in the prophetic and poetic books of the Bible. "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" "Hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man." And in the New Testament our Lord has given us His summary of moral law in the words, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself."

Now it is possible that the very completeness of this standard of duty may discourage a really honest and earnest man at the commencement of his inquiries. He desired to know his full duty. He craved specific directions as to what to do in specific circumstances. He desired a book of directions; and he finds a book of principles. He hoped to be helped in questions of *casuistry, i.e.*, "cases of conscience." He desired a Bible in which these "cases of conscience" should be taken up one by one, and so decided for him that there could be no mistake. Just now, indeed, this whole matter of *casuistry* has fallen into disfavour. The so-called "casuists" of the Roman Church, and especially those of the Jesuit Fathers, who were so mercilessly exposed by Pascal in his "Provincial Letters," have made the very word "casuistry" odious. It has come to signify that trickery of moral reasoning whereby the evil is made to appear to be the good, and the wrong to be the right. But the word in its

best sense is to be retained. "Cases of conscience" will always arise, and they are to be met. The way of duty is not always clear to a man. Let not those who would give counsel to men in their spiritual perplexity be stigmatized as casuists. The old Puritan divines dealt much in these "cases of conscience." Boston, in his "Fourfold State," and Flavel, in his "Touchstone,"—books largely read half a century ago,—devoted much space to this method of religious teaching. And every parent to-day, who is asked by a conscientious child, "Is it right to do this or that thing?" is, for the time, a casuist to that child. Every pastor, asked by his young people about questions of amusement, or, by his older brethren, about matters of practical righteousness, is forced to be a casuist. Nay, each man of us is compelled sometimes to be a casuist unto himself, deciding in special cases what he ought to do. And just here men feel their need of help.

Very many think that duty would have been much simplified had the Bible been a book of infallible directions as to practical duties,—a volume of casuistry. And to a certain limited extent it has indeed entered upon the decision of such questions. Our Lord and His Apostles have determined more than one of the cases submitted to them. The instant decision about "the tribute money," the matter of "wearing gold and costly array," of "eating meats offered to idols," of "remaining covered or uncovered" in the church,—these show clearly that the method of the Bible is in part that of casuistry. But in these cases just named there arises the question as to how far these decisions were made in view of circumstances peculiar to those times; as to how far, in entirely different circumstances, under a wholly different type of civilization, we are bound by them. They are plainly not

moral law. No more do they belong to a particular dispensation. They are simply applications of Christian principles to local cases. They are inferential duties. And here, where men feel their greatest need of direction in practical living, they are wont to think that they have no sufficient guidance. They are not sure that the Scripture instances exactly meet their case. The widely different conditions of a man in society to-day make us reluctant to apply rules which were evidently given to meet a condition of things long since passed away.

Had the Biblical method been mainly that of *casuistry*, —the citation of cases so that we might compare our own with them,—two things would have followed. First we should have in this always-increasing Bible the most ponderous of volumes. In that case the differing ages and habits and modes of thought, as they bring new duties and furnish new instances, must all have their record. Our Bible would be a sort of law-library of court decisions. In that case, John's words about the world not being able to contain all the books if everything were written would be no more an allowable figure of speech, but a nearly literal statement. And it would follow, next, that we must spend a lifetime in search of precedents. This ponderous volume might require the search of years before we should discover anything that looked like our own case. A single circumstance in which the recorded precedent failed to match the instance that we should bring from our own lives might vitiate the precedent, and leave us as undecided as before. Let us suppose a simple instance. Let it be certain — certain by a divine revelation—that *A* should give a specific sum of money to a specific charity. He expends thousands in endowing a professorship in some college or seminary. Now does it follow that *B*, with the same wealth and in-

come, should do a similar thing? Some one circumstance in *B's* situation or prospects may change the whole case. The two men may be widely dissimilar in necessary family expenses, in probability of future life, in the dependencies that belong to their position. It is impossible that the certainty of *A's* duty should absolutely bind *B's* action. The duty of both is to give. But *B's* duty may be to give more or less than *A*. It is indeed helpful, in a general way, to see another's duty when we have to decide our own. We may *infer* what we should do from our knowledge of what another has done. But this is quite another thing from the absolute decision of a casuistry which is its own law. So that had this been the Scriptural method of teaching us our duty, nothing would have been gained but much lost. It is better as it is now, on the score of simplicity. There are just enough of these decisions in God's Word to teach us that religion is a practical affair. But we are not to be so careful as to the precedent as to be careless of the principle.

The Scripture method is also that of *biography*. It is worthy of our notice that a very large part of our Bible is historical; and its historical portions are mainly biographical. We are coming back in our methods of historic composition to the model furnished us by the great Hebrew lawgiver and historian. He gives us the story of the life of representative men. We look on an age through the eye of the men who saw it best. Every movement of human thought culminates in some man. To know him is to know it. To see all the events of an age as he saw them is to see it in its own light, and to judge of it as it should be judged. The five Books of Moses are a series of personal sketches, of individual biographies; and with these are incorporated the chief *events of each* generation. The same method is pursued

in all the historic books till we come to the Psalms. And even the Psalms are only another kind of biography. They are the interior history of a human soul looking out upon the moral events of God's world, and then uttering itself in the strains of sacred song. And the Book of Ecclesiastes is the biography of a man who was first a worldly man, next a sceptical man, and finally a godly man, and who faithfully describes his experiences, his reasonings, and his conclusions, in each of these positions. Even the prophetic books are not wanting in constant reference to the personal history of their authors. And in the New Testament, the Four Gospels and the Acts are in the form of direct biography ; while Paul and Peter, in their Epistles, are presenting continually to us fragments of their own experience in the religious life.

And each saintly soul is eminent in some beautiful virtue. The steady faith of one and the intense consecration of another, the tender love of this and the rugged earnestness of that man, the patience shown here and the wise zeal that blazes there,—all go towards forming a book of the choicest biographies in which each select grace of character has some bright exemplar. The names of these holy men and women have passed into history. They are familiar to the language of the world. They are the illustrated alphabet of human goodness. And wherever men call to mind any shining virtue, any beauty or grace of character, they link the thought of it with some name in this great and golden roll-call of the men "of whom the world was not worthy." Nor does it matter very largely that, in saying these men were imperfect, we are only confessing that they were men. The one pattern, "the man Christ Jesus," stands out bright enough and far enough above them all. So that for higher example we point any man to Him. Christ is the illustration of Christianity. No

other is needed. One sun is enough for our firmament, though there be many stars. No need that on the one hand every star should be sun; nor on the other, that we deny to any star its own brightness. These men were not so removed from worldly trial that their virtues were the easy goodness of men untested by opposition. They fought in the good fight. Their brows, if smooth and even, were worn down to that evenness by the chafings of actual life. They had no select and secluded station. Found in every rank, they adorned their position by the lustre of their piety. Some dwelt in shepherds' tents and some sat on thrones. Some served in palaces and some suffered in prisons. Some wandered wearily through strange lands, nor knew a home, and some gathered about them wealth and beauty and art. They had no idea that they were doing anything very great. No thought had they of the world-wide fame they were achieving. So true is it that the names of men who work for earthly fame are "writ in water," while those who link themselves with God and His cause sometimes, by their very forgetfulness of self, secure self-renown. They gain an earthly immortality in the memory of the holy, and they gain always a place on the pages of the Lamb's Book of Life. Their names shall be read out at the judgment amid the acclaim of the assembled universe.

And the wisdom of God in selecting this biographical method of teaching becomes the more clear as we remember how powerfully the story of a human life always affects us. No matter how obscure that life, so it be well told, it takes us captive. It wakes responsive feeling. It has in it the tender touch that makes the world akin. Not a little of the moral teaching of our time is done by *the novelist.* The old novel with its impossibilities has

gone by. "True to life" is the standard to-day. Is there some abuse in court or hovel, is there some delay of the law, some barbarity in social life, some excrescence on the fair form of a nation's freedom, some political error working mischief to humanity, the novelist sees in it his opportunity. Sketching that evil in its effect upon some character that is the child of his fertile brain he holds up the sin to the scorn of the age. It needs not that he be himself so far in advance of others. He may not be personally higher than his fellows. He needs not be himself a philanthropist to sketch the character of a philanthropist any more than he needs to be a villain to sketch a villain's work. He may have only the artist's sense of what is fit and right. His æsthetic nature may be his only guide when his work serves high moral purposes and helps to a needed reform.

And so, too, if there be any saintly virtue to be shown to men in a better glory than any which painter ever threw on canvas, the story of some man or woman who stands, not with the traditional white wings and flowing garments in which the old-time painters strove to make piety so unworldly that it was unreal,—not this but the story of that life as it works itself out in rough contact with that which is unfriendly, will always touch us into a fresh admiration of the virtue itself. We part from the story, as we close the volume, only to feel a stronger impulse to imitate such a virtue and a keener sense of the way to do it. Beautiful was the precept, and we approved it. But more beautiful is the instance and example that has charmed our hearts. And we must notice that God's method of teaching through biography has all the charm, all the pathos, all the vigour and impressiveness, *with none of the necessary evils*, of the modern modes of instruction. He gives us *real* lives. He had centuries from which to

select these examples. These men are actual men, not figures stuffed with straw. They are seen not as persons of "impossible goodness," but they have the spots of our humanity on the disk of the very virtue that makes them illustrious. We have never to stop and say that this man is such a paragon of excellence that the virtue is angelic rather than human. We never have to impose on ourselves the mental trickery which we accept when studying the novelist's characters. We need no effort of imagination to make the Bible heroes actual men. We have never to fancy that fiction is history. These men of the Scriptures are our brethren,—higher, better in degree, but still our brethren in the flesh, even while they are examples to us in every grace of the Spirit.

Nor is this method confined to the good. The Bible pictures of bold, bad men are among the most striking in the whole volume. The writers never go out of their way to find bad men. But when they meet such men, they do not shrink from showing them up to the gaze of the world. Sometimes they transfix a vile man by a single epithet. How little is said of Judas. But what is said "pinions him as sure as Prometheus to the rock." Sometimes we see a man working out his wickedness, passing on through the steps of his sin. We trace him in all his thought as the desire grows up to the fructifying deed. We look at him in all his fears and hesitations, which, after a useless struggle, do not hinder him from the final and fatal end. Where else in lines so sharply drawn is there another Pilate? An express biography of the man would have been nothing to it. His baseness is baser for the contrasted glory of the being whom he is certain to give over in the end to the mob. The washing of his hands, his mingled weakness and hypocrisy,—why these gospel *writers have* gibbeted that man for ever!

And he who would be a "Christian in the world" must be familiar with these biographies, that his hatred for the evil and his love for the pure and the good may be increased. There is so much in this world to confuse moral distinctions, so much special pleading for special forms of wrong, that we have reason to study these records which were made without fear or favour; biographies of good men that help us to feel that goodness is real; biographies of evil men that make us know the wrong as a hateful thing.

But when we have studied as carefully as we may these life-histories, there is one thing that troubles a practical man. It is the same fact which we found when studying the Biblical cases of casuistry. Our case is never exactly met. There is always some one important thing in which the precedent does not apply. These old-time heroes lived in other lands, amid other surroundings. Their biographies help us. They rouse us. To a certain degree we feel bound to imitate these noble souls. But it is in the little things of life that we trip most easily. And in them we need the most direction. But just here is where precedent and example serve us least. They do not crowd our consciences to be brave in matching our deeds with those of such men. For it is the tone of a life which is more to us than its acts; just as the touches which make up the manner of a master are those most difficult to imitate in our copy of his picture.

Nor must we forget that God's method of teaching requires a very peculiar spirit in us; a certain receptive temper; a tone of sympathetic feeling. The Bible has something for all. It has a key for every heart. It addresses the sinful. It aims to touch the higher tier of faculties in every man. He may not yet be holy, and there may be in him no holy emotions to which an appeal can be made. But there are certain natural desires.

They are his by virtue of his manhood. There is a natural "love of possession." This is addressed by the Bible. It bids him lay up treasure in heaven. There is the natural "desire for happiness." The Bible calls him to seek the narrow way that leadeth unto life, There is in every man a "dread of sorrow," and this natural feeling is also addressed by God's Word. It bids the man to fear him which "after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell." But the special teachings of Scripture are for those already in sympathy with its holy principles. It asks that one, first a Christian himself, shall go out into the world for which Christ died as in some sense His representative. He is to represent Christ in his words, his conduct. Those words and that conduct are to be permeated with the Christian spirit. For better than any merely mechanical rules is the loving expression of the spirit of vital religion. Not that rules are useless. Not that a man is above them, Not that, apart from express commands, a man is a law unto himself. But piety has an instinctive knowledge of how rules are to be interpreted. It finds in them not bondage but liberty. Nor is its liberty the license that disobeys any command. For this liberty is sympathetic, and so is swift and sure in its obedience. Sometimes we have seen two human hearts that understood each other so perfectly that one would take up the half-finished question of the other and answer it before it had hardly left the other's lips. And sometimes even a glance has been enough without a spoken word. There are in God's household service little uncommanded things that a soul in sympathy with God has no need of being told about. Enough that they will be likely to *please* God. The glance directs. "I will guide thee with mine eye."

This is the *tone* of piety needed to-day in practical life.

He who wants to be a Christian out in the world, who would be in vital contact with men in his own age, who would be a live man and yet a faithful disciple, must obtain and retain this inner sympathy with God's gracious purpose. This divine instinct will help him more than anything else; for it is the effect of God's indwelling and illuminating Spirit. It will guide him as a student of the Scriptures in search of wisdom to order his life. It will help him to give due authority to moral law. It will enable him to see what is peculiar to the Christian dispensation. It will free him from the two widely different dangers, of slavish precedent in one direction and of carelessness about things commanded in the other. It will help him amid the wonderful richness of Scripture biography to adopt the virtues of holy men, and then to express those virtues wisely and well in the changed circumstances of the present hour. He will study the Bible for *principles* as well as precepts. He may not always at once be able to apply those principles when discovered; may wish that in some cases duty were plainer; but in the end he may come to see the wisdom of God in his methods of teaching. There is secured in this way the best moral discipline. We learn to exercise a Christian judgment and heart about our duty; and, perhaps, the discipline to be gained only in this way, only by this careful study, only by this exercise of a Christian judgment in determining under God our duty, is the very thing that He desires us to secure by all this variety of method in His Holy Word.

III.

THE PRINCIPLE OF PLEASING CHRIST.

THE PRINCIPLE OF PLEASING CHRIST—THE HISTORICAL CHRIST; THE LIVING CHRIST—HIS LIFE STUDIED—HIS SPIRIT RECEIVED—LOVE IMITATES.

DR. ARNOLD, of Rugby, lays down the following rule with reference to the precepts and precedents of the Scriptures:—

"A command given to one man, or to one generation of men, is, and can be, binding upon other men, and other generations, only so far forth as the circumstances in which they are placed are similar. A commandment of eternal and universal obligation is one that relates to points in which all men at all times are alike, and which there is the same reason, therefore, for all obeying equally. Other commandments may be of a transitory nature, and binding only upon particular persons, or at particular times; but yet, when they proceed from the highest authority, their indirect use may be universal, even although their direct use be limited. That is, from knowing what was God's will under such and such circumstances, we may gather, by parity of reasoning, what it will be in all circumstances; namely, the same when the circumstances are the same; analogous when the circumstances are analogous; and absolutely contrary when they also are contrary."

When he speaks of "commandments of eternal obligation binding on all men at all times alike," Dr. Arnold evidently refers to *moral law.* And when he declares that "some commands are transitory, binding only at particular times," he must have in mind those which belong to a particular *dispensation.* But what shall be said of those precepts which Arnold so fitly calls "of indirect use to us"? Are we not in broad difficulties at once when we would judge about how far "circumstances are the same, are analogous, or absolutely contrary"? But if there is a difficulty here, it is one that "must needs be." Besides, it is a difficulty more seeming than real. A regenerate heart, an honest purpose, and a careful study of the Bible, are indeed required; and these had, there is need of "sanctified common sense" in applying a few simple *principles* to practical life; and then there can be no danger of any serious mistake. For these principles are very obvious, very easily understood, and can be instantly applied in any given case.

One of these principles, so clear as almost to be self-evident, is the principle of *pleasing Christ.*

Read the Epistles of the New Testament. Jesus has died; His body came forth from the grave; men saw Him ascend into the heavens; and yet the writers of these Epistles constantly declare His presence with themselves, and assume the same with the men to whom they wrote. They made no claim of a *bodily* presence. It was evidently impossible that Christ's human body should be with them in various places at one and the same time. Nor was it the merely human soul of our Lord—that "which grew in wisdom"—for which these men claimed this omnipresence. But they certainly did believe in an omnipresent Christ; He was "with them," and "in them." They said He was only in this thing fulfilling His

own promise, "I will manifest myself unto them." True for the first century of the Christian era, the fact is the same to-day. Our faith is not in a Christ now dead, but in a Christ now living. He said, "I am with you unto the end of the world." *This* presence of Christ—a presence none the less real because spiritual—is all the presence we need. The bodily presence added would be no gain; for the Omniscient Christ only can meet the wants of His widely-sundered flock. Him we have. He is the same in every thought and feeling as when He was here in bodily form. And it is not a beautiful fiction by which we happily impose on ourselves, but it is the literal and exact statement of a fact, when we say that Christ—not some influence or effluence, but Christ Himself, the very Christ of the New Testament—is now near to Christians. He is pleased or displeased with each disciple's every act; and hence the simple and obvious *principle* which we lay down for practical Christian living, that we are to do those things, and those only, that will *please Christ.*

In order to know what will please Him, we must know "the mind of Christ." This sends us back to the four Gospels, which contain His human life. That life, in its outward aspects at least, all the world has now agreed to praise. There were infidels once; there are none now; at least there are none in name. Once men threw their mud at the spotless garments of Christ's purity; their mud would not stick. All now praise Jesus Christ as the perfect man. Those Galilean fishermen, if they invented such a character, have done a greater miracle in such an invention than any they ascribe to their Christ. That such men could have imagined such a character, and have placed Him in the most difficult positions, in no one of which does He ever fail of being the perfect man, is too

great an absurdity to be believed. As the sunlight is best proof of the sun, so these four biographies of the One who was ideally as well as actually perfect give proof to the world, not only historically but morally, that the one only perfect being, Jesus, has actually lived among men. And thousands who cannot state the argument feel it anew at every fresh reading of their New Testament. "The one perfect character has come into our world and lived in it, filling all the moulds of action, all the terms of duty and love, with His own divine manners, works, and charities. All the conditions of life are raised by the meaning He has shown to be in them. The world itself is changed, and is no more the same it was."[1] And yet Jesus affects us not so much by single acts in which we are to give Him a servile imitation. Some things He did we are also to do. He was in many an act our example, even in the outward form of acting. His dutifulness in his childhood, His prayerfulness through life, His going about doing good,—allt hese things are ours for close imitation. But it is not so much as a fixed and set mould into which our lives are to be run, but as a generous model,—a model in its principles, a model in its whole scope and meaning,—that the Master's life impresses us. Any mere outward imitation of Christ's acts apart from the purposes of that life would be only

"A painted ship upon a painted ocean."

Mechanical imitation is caricature. To wear Napoleon's sword about one's body is not to be a Napoleon. The child who thought "Jesus was like our doctor because He healed the sick," was hardly more out of the way than many a grown man whose crude idea of Christ is derived from an outward fact or two of His life that has impressed his fancy or his memory.

[1] *Bushnell,* "Nature and the Supernatural," p. 331.

Perhaps the average thought of the world concerning Christ has come on far enough towards the true conception to see in Him a person of great *kindness*. His benevolence, His unselfishness, the world is getting to own as that which is beneath His wonderful life, its root and its spring. But owning this, the world must "go on towards perfection" in its idea of Him. For that kindness was peculiar. It was founded in certain facts about the position of men which must not be ignored. The great object He had in view in His life, the development of His master-thought, His purpose, running through all miracle and teaching, the bearing of His life upon His death and His resurrection, and the relation of His work to man's salvation,—these are all to be considered. They show a very peculiar mission. His work, in many respects, was not like ours. There were acts of miracle done every day which it would be as ridiculous as it would be impious for us to imitate. In many of His words He was alone. We may not attempt to speak as He spoke. And yet all these words and works were for us. And we are to enter into them. We are to imitate His devotion to His Father's will. We are to see the reasons for His life and His death. There is to be such a close sympathy with the objects He had in view, such a sense of man's great need of a Redeemer, such a union with Him in His outlook upon the guilt and danger of the race, such an appreciation of His sorrows, and of the reasons for them, and of the worth of them for man's salvation, such an entering into His feeling as He hung on the cross, that one can say, with Paul, "I am crucified with Christ." When one has been thus in feeling, in appreciation, "with Christ" *there*, he can add, with Paul, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the *flesh I live by* the faith of the Son of God." "For me

to live is Christ." The life culminated in the death. The death understood in its purpose, then, for the first time, the life is understood, and therefore imitated in its whole aim and scope. The death emphasises the life, and gives us new reason as well as new motive for being "like Christ." Imitation ceases to be a matter of mere duty enjoined by rule. Conscience is reinforced by the heart. It is seen now how things little as well as things large may be "done unto the Lord." No more are we left to a cold admiration of a perfect character. Jesus Christ is no longer seen simply as a masterpiece of moral art. He is no lonely statue on a lofty pedestal extorting praise from those who are looking with critical eye. He is a man with a heart, and we feel its throbbings as we lean upon Him. We have looked in upon the thought which has begotten such a life. We have seen the inner self of Christ, and not simply the life He lived and the grave where they laid Him. And so, our duty before to be like Him, is our privilege now. His heart has caught our heart in the captivity of a divine sympathy. The beauty of holiness has a new charm in Him. He called His followers at first "disciples;" then, just before His death, they were His "friends;" after His resurrection they were "brethren." Then came the ascension, and speedily the gift of the Spirit. The "friends," the "brethren," become the "apostles." They are sent by Him, as He was sent by the Father. And now it is more than mere æsthetic sympathy that they feel, as, enlightened by the Spirit, they look back and see new meaning in every word and act of the Lord. They are one with Him. They live for the end for which He died. Their new work as apostles differs in form but not in spirit from His earthly life. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" is the keynote not only of the convert's life, but of the

apostle's service. And as then, so now, discipleship has no higher ambition nor sweeter joy than "to do always those things that please Him." All our thinking is to be run in the mould of His thought; our outlook on men is to be as if through His eyes: we are to hear as He would hear the voices of want and sorrow; and mind and heart and hand are never better used than when we are asking what He would have done had He been here with us; nay, what He who *is* with us desires us to do.

Nor is there any loss of this sympathy when the higher nature of our Lord is remembered. Alone the thought of the Great God might overawe. The old Greek met the Christian of the new religion with the plea that the doctrine of "one God" was unsympathetic. The one God must be so far above us and so far away that He could not be the companion of man's nearer life. He could not, so thought the Greek, take the place of the gods who inhabited every stream and dwelt in every mountain and valley, whose breath was in every wind that blew, who guided the sun in his course, and who were also the household gods in every home. Vainly the Christian answered the Greek that the Almighty God, the Omniscient God, the Omnipresent God, in whom he believed, was also and always, of necessity, near to every thing and to every being. The *feeling* remained, as of distance, as of a greatness too great for actual sympathy. Not till the Christian unfolded to the Greek the doctrine of Christ as "God manifest in the flesh" was his hearer satisfied. God revealed in humanity was God revealed in the nearest way. There is no distance either in fact or feeling when God is revealed "in the flesh." The simple fitness of such a revelation for the very purposes of sympathy is evident. Mingling with the reverence we feel only for God Himself is that dear sense of nearness and

oneness with Him who "took our nature." He has manifested Himself elsewhere. "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen." But the manifestation in human thought through manhood is the nearest to us. Christ takes up our thought, and we in turn take up His. Nothing is lost from the human by the gain of the divine sympathy. For the twofold nature of Christ has always a single consciousness. He is one person. We have "one Lord."

And this "mystery of godliness" is no mere theme for theologians to examine at their leisure. Nor yet is it simply and only a devout meditation for the "still hour" of closet devotion. It bears directly on the practical work of Christian living. For our Lord went out and in among men. He kept Himself in with the common workers of His day.

> "No stern recluse,
> As His forerunner; but the Guest and Friend
> Of all who sought Him, mingling with all life
> To breathe His holiness on all. No film
> Obscured His spotless lustre. From His lips
> Truth limpid without error flowed. Disease
> Fled from His touch. Pain heard Him and was not.
> Despair smiled in His presence. Devils knew
> And trembled. In the omnipotence of faith
> Unintermittent, indefectible,
> Leaning upon His Father's might, He bent
> All nature to His will. The tempter sank,
> He whispering, into a waveless calm. The bread
> Given from His hand fed thousands and to spare.
> The stormy waters as the solid rock
> Were pavement for His footstep. Death its
> With vain reluctancies yielded its prey
> To the stern mandates of the Prince of Life."[1]

And this Christ, who was Himself in the world, and

[1] E. H. Bickersteth, "Yesterday, To-day, and Forever."

who felt once the chafings of its care and the friction of its work, is the Christ now with us. The hymn which owns His presence is not only for Easter-morning, but for every work-day morning, as the soul sings,—

"I say to all men far and near,
That He is risen again;
That He is *with us now*, and *here*,
And ever shall remain."

The obligation to please Christ is further enforced by the sense of personal *gratitude*. We owe everything to this Saviour. Much as we may admire His example and sympathise with His object in visiting our world, there is a part of His work in which He stood sublimely alone. Tears have flowed at the foot of the cross, and martyr's blood has been shed by those who loved the Lord. But only *His* blood has been shed in atonement. "He trod the wine-press alone." "Every drop of my blood thanks you," said the liberated prisoner, who had been saved from death by the efforts of a kindly man. Personal gratitude is one of the strongest impulses of a generous soul. No familiarity can take the rich meaning out of the hymn sung wherever the English language is spoken,—

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small:
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

It is noticeable that the Bible never uses the word Christianity. It could not do it. It is contrary to its whole idea. In New Testament times, even as now, the convert "finds Christ," not Christianity. Should one come talking of finding Christianity true, we should distrust him. We should fear that the heart was lagging behind *the head*. The head may say Christianity, but the heart

says Christ. Paul speaks of his conversion as God's "revealing His Son unto him." Something of this takes place in every conversion. A new personal relation is established with Christ. He who was born in the manger is in a sense born anew in every convert's heart. The historical Christ becomes the present Christ. The astonishment of faith once more says, "My Lord and my God."

Mingling with this gratitude is another feeling which prompts also to please Christ. There are men who know that they *love* Him. This is more than æsthetic appreciation. It is deeper even than gratitude. Love takes in all else, and goes further than them all. A man may be as certain of loving Christ as of loving wife or child. Love is born in a mother's heart with her babe; and the love of Christ is given at the soul's entrance into the kingdom of God. The æsthetic feeling that appreciates the general perfection of Christ's character belongs to all whose tastes are cultured. But love is heart-born. It is at once a principle and a passion. It has steadiness and it has ardour. The measure of love, as a principle, is always its desire to *please* the one loved. Sacrifices are readily made, one's own ease or pleasure is surrendered, that the person loved may be gratified. And love has its glow as well as its steady strength. The warm heart tides one over the places where strength alone would be only failure. The enthusiasm of love, directed by good sense and sustained by holy principle, has made men victors in the severest trials, as they have grasped the banner and pressed forward in "the name of the Lord." Love always imitates. It copies almost unconsciously not only the tones in the voice, but the very modes in the thought and feeling of the one loved. He is a model; and love has him ever in mind. Who has not seen in

a family the husband becoming more gentle and the wife more strong and self-reliant by the companionship of years. Their love makes them unconscious imitators.

What now if one or both of them shall take Christ as a companion and friend; shall think every day of Him as one always near, and shall come to refer daily action to His wish and will, asking, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Can this be done without a potent influence upon the whole interior and exterior life?

But life has its shadows as well as its sunshine. There are valleys as well as mountain-tops. To suffer is sometimes to serve. Patience and fortitude are Christian graces, the lustre of which shines like that of stars of the first magnitude in a night otherwise one of deepest darkness. And sometimes a Christian, by the spirit in which he has borne a sorrow, by the evident grace that has sustained him, has compelled men to do homage to the gospel of his Saviour. Men have said nothing but religion could have made him take his trial in that way. A missionary mother stood on the shore where she was to take leave of her children. They were going back to her American home that they might be educated apart from heathen influences. She printed one last fond kiss on their faces wet with the tears of parting, then lifted up her eyes to heaven and said, "O Jesus, I do this for Thee." And back to her toil, to lift her dusky-hued sisters into the light and love of the gospel, she went, and the thought in her heart was that the Master was pleased with the sacrifices she had made. Said another Christian, "I have been a follower of Christ for more than forty years. I have always felt in my days of trouble that Jesus had met the same form of trial, and so there has been between us the fellowship of sorrow. I lost property; but I felt that I was the nearer to Him who left heaven's

riches for me. I buried friends, and felt then that I was in a sense one with Him who wept at the grave of Lazarus. And now I am stricken with blindness. At first I was in the deepest distress because I had come, as I thought, into a place where He could not sympathise with me; for He had never been blind. But there came to me one day the text, 'They blindfolded Him;' and Christ and I were one again. Blindness even, if so only I could be one with Him, was a blessing. If this trial pleased Him, it was all right. And I knew He would be pleased if I took the trial trustfully, and should thus 'suffer with Him.'"

We look with admiring praise upon the spectacle of earthly affection. We all give the benediction of our "best wishes" to those who go forth with marriage-vows freshly spoken. We call them lovers. But what is their love now compared with what it will be when they have taken life's trials together; when they have rejoiced over the cradle and wept over the grave of their children! Blessings on the old loves! Blessings on the frosty heads that carry with them hearts warmer, richer, riper than when they started hand-in-hand in their marriage-life! The love for each other that has grown with their years, that has become more tender and tremulous as they have shared each other's sorrows and doubled each other's joys is a delightful thing. And when we see some ripe, mellow Christian, who has lived closely with Christ, whose piety has gone on so far into its rich autumnal fruitage, that, like "holy Rutherford," he can revel in the "Song of Songs, which is Solomon's," and can speak of Christ constantly as "my Beloved;" who can use these figures that to coarser souls would be sensuous, while he finds in them the hidden sweetness, the honey in the rock; who can, with no irreverence, take up the fondest words

of the very abandonment of spiritual love in these "Canticles,"—how beautiful is the sight!

But one comes to this Beulah-land only by the way of previous "walking with God." Such fruits are not "tied to the bough." They must grow. They hang only on well-rooted and thrifty trees. To come to this latter, there must be an earlier experience. In the days of spring and summer there must be Christian living, if there is to be this autumnal splendour of serene piety. And this Christian living cannot be so much an outward imitation of our Lord's life as an attempt to transfuse that life into ours,—to express His wish in our act. It is a very great thing to say with Paul, "Christ liveth in me." Far more is this than to say merely that we try to be like Him. Another "lives in us" only as we drop our personal ways of thinking, judging, and feeling, and as we act out His principles. To do this, a man is to ask, "what Christ would have done were He here, and were He in my place, with my duty and my work." It is not what He would do were He here now as the appointed Redeemer of men. For we know what He did when on earth. But this is another thing. It is an inquiry of what He, the "man Christ Jesus," would do if He had only a common man's common mission; if He were appointed to push the plane, or pound the iron, or stand behind the counter, or handle the pen, or sit in the professor's chair or the student's seat, or practice at the bar, or cure men's bodies, or stand in a nineteenth century pulpit. Translate His principles and His spirit into your life as lived in your circumstances, and let this thing be done with reference to every act in business and social life,—and that is to "live the life you now live by faith on the Son of God:" it is to say, "Christ liveth in me." One may be perplexed *about rules*; the mere wording of some precept may look

another way. One may be in honest doubt about the right or the wrong of a certain line of conduct: but if one will bring it here to this test, to this rule that has in it the spirit of all rules—what will *please Christ*—the doubt will usually depart. Asking what He would have done in just our place, with just our mission and duties, the matter, especially if we have become thoroughly acquainted with our New Testament, will be ordinarily very plain.

And it is something very wonderful,—this growing consciousness of a mutual friendship between Christ and one's own soul. We get beyond the mere *talk* about Christ as our Elder Brother, and into the feeling that this relation is a very real thing; is no beautiful fancy, but a very actual fact. And as He has been doing and is doing for us, so we get not only into the doing but into the *habit* of doing for Him. Says another, "We may do more for this Friend (Christ) than for any other. In your friendship and love, your greatest trial oftentimes is that you cannot do for those you love all that you desire. How often do we hear of those whom we greatly love and respect as being in trouble, but we are not at liberty to tell them how much we feel and how much we would rejoice to do in their behalf. Now there is not a friend, nor one whom you would feel honoured to call your friend, who would esteem your greatest favours so much as Christ would to receive from you a cup of cold water. While there are bedsides and chambers where we cannot come, we can nevertheless visit Christ in His sickness; we can go to Him without waiting to be sent for; in prison, we can befriend Him; a stranger, we can minister unto Him. We can live for Christ; we can bring "presents to Him," large or small, or in the form of anything valuable to us, and it will not fail to be acceptable

and valuable to Him. We may contend with Him in love, and say that it is a crowning joy that He permits us to do for Him all we desire, that He accepts that desire when the ability is inconsiderable, and that He is pleased to give, as the reason for His acceptance of us at the great day, our poor but affectionate testimonies of love to Him."[1]

Of model men the world has had a sufficiency. There have been model men in war, in art, in science, in literature, in statesmanship. They have stood up and apart from their fellows. They have had renown. Their names are called with reverence. But Christ was more than a moral model. He gets homage, but He gets love with it. The world's verdict makes Him the one perfect man. But strangely enough, in His case this perfection, so far from separating, brings Him closer to our hearts. He prevails by His love against our natural selfishness. And many of the race count it alike their honour and their joy to call themselves by His name. And they are asking not only about His doctrine that they may satisfy the truth-loving intellect, and His grace that they may have Him dwell in them, "the hope of glory," but they are striving to *please Him*, alike in the devotions of the closet and the activities of the busy world.

[1] Adams, "Friends of Christ."

IV.

THE DUTY TO ONE'S SELF.

THE PRINCIPLE OF DUTY TO ONE'S SELF—THE BROAD VIEW OF BODY, MIND, AND SOUL—THE CAPACITY FOR THE SPIRITUAL LIFE—PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT.

"THOU shalt love thy neighbour *as thyself.*" Self, then, is to be regarded; nay, is to be loved. Others also; but others "as thyself." So, again, in the Golden Rule we are taught, "Whatsoever ye would that others should *do to you*, do ye even so to them." Duty to one's self is thus made a measure of duty to others. It is a high and solemn duty to love one's self purely, truly, nobly; to regard one's own highest interests; to take up our life-work with broad views of the dignity and destiny of one's own being; to look upon ourselves as those who have responsibilities such as are laid only on creatures made in the "image of God."

We are to distinguish clearly and carefully this self-love from selfishness. The one is a duty commended, the other a vice forbidden. In a fine sentence of Mackintosh's, he gives incidentally the sharp difference between the two. "Selfishness is a vice utterly at variance with the happiness of him who harbours it; and as such it is condemned by self-love." Selfishness would trample on every right of God or man to gain its ends. But a true self-love seeks its joys within the pale of right, assured that in duty there is happiness. It asks what is best, on

the whole, for one's self; it prizes one's self, neither undervaluing nor overvaluing one's place or powers. Men may think too exclusively of self, but none can think too much, too highly; none can overvalue the gift of powers which, if less in degree, are the same in kind with those of the Creator.

We need to exercise a noble regard for ourselves,—our whole selves,—body, mind, and soul.

This principle of duty to one's self has respect to the *body*. We are fearfully and wonderfully made. There is no piece of human mechanism that can compare with this workmanship of God in our bodily frame. No matter where you begin the examination; no matter what organ you take up for your study, simple amazement is always the result. You are amazed at the delicacy and strength, at the order and yet the freedom! The eye has taught man to make his telescope. But man's nicest work, when he has spent years in polishing a single lens, is clumsy compared with any common eye. The ear, so delicate to distinguish the shades of a tone, so nice to detect the quality that belongs to each human voice; its compass running from the faintest pulsations of a whisper up to the detonations of the thunders that shake the very earth,—what a marvel it is! And each organ of the body is complete. And there is, too, the completeness of the whole mass of them. There are distinct systems,—the nervous, the muscular, the respiratory, the circulatory; each mysteriously perfect, and all harmoniously combined in the one living being. And through this body, which, after all, is not for itself, the mind and the soul are to manifest their powers. Its health permits, its disease hinders the soul that would use this body as an instrument by which a part of its own work is to be done. It will not do to neglect the body which is so skilfully

made and is so easily harmed, and which, when harmed, harms all the rest of the man.

That is a narrow view of religion which proposes to care much for the soul and little for the body; for the body is God's workmanship as well as the soul. The body is, moreover, to be immortal. Death touches it only as death touches the corn of wheat which falls into the earth and dies only that it may bring forth fruit in the appointed hour of harvest. Beyond the resurrection the body lives again. This corruptible must put on incorruption. For what it is as God's work, for what it is to us, for what it is to be, we must value the body. Its laws are to be understood. A part, and a larger part than many think, of one's religious duty is to care for this physical frame. It is to be valued, not despised. He who neglects it does it at his peril. A sound body is a priceless gift, and when given is to be used and not abused. Many a sad mood of the soul comes from a diseased body. More than one man's religious perplexities and confusion have been due to a dyspeptic stomach. If the body were but a beast of burden to carry us over the journey, it would be well to use it wisely, feeding it neither too little nor too much; urging it never so as to harm it in the end, nor so pampering it that it should lose all power of service. But the body is more than the beast of burden on which we ride. An important part of ourselves we are to care for it with a genuine regard, making the most of its senses, educating them to sharpness, so that we may be alive to many a thing in the world about us which others, because of undeveloped powers, fail to notice. It is a duty to get the most out of the world through one's cultured senses. No spring with its fresh growths, nor summer with its laughing scenes, nor autumn with its ripe splendour of fruitage or of land-

scape, is to pass over without adding to our stores from the things unseen in former years. We are to see a new beauty in the starry heaven of the winter's night; a new glory in the white vaporous masses that go sailing through the sky in the slow, still days of mid-autumn; a new grandeur in the thick heavy folds of the dark tempest cloud blown on and up into the central fields of the sky in the heated summer afternoon. And each year a man is to be more alive not only to the mere beauty or grandeur of the world, but to *God's thought* spoken in each thing. There is a reason why one thing differs from another. It is ours not only to know the thing, but the underlying thought. For these things are the alphabet that expresses the Divine mind.

Nor must we forget that many a mood of the soul is best amended through the bodily senses. From the time when Israel's king drove from himself an evil spirit until now, the strains of music have had for some men a singular power. The spirit has been stirred or calmed, debased or exalted, by the tones that have come to the bodily ear. The wonderful power of sacred song is not alone in the words, it is also in the tones of the music; it is in the harmony and melody that touch the outward, and so go singing on to the inward ear. It is not enough that one read the same sentiment in prose. It is not enough that the harmony of the numbers be exquisitely given in the finished reading or recitation. Songs are to be sung. The tones of music, of part blending with part, that indefinable union of sounds that we call harmony, is needed to produce the full effect. "*Singing* to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs," Paul says to a Church whom he would have happy "in the Lord." And as some through the ear, so others through the eye, have been able to calm a perturbed spirit. The long-drawn

breath has steadied the faltering nerve and quieted the agitation of the soul. The tonic of the air on the sea-shore, the clear dry breezes among the hills, have invigorated the worn frame, and the Christian has gone back to his work feeling sure that his vacation hours were not lost time. In the better care for his body he has better fitted himself for the duties he owes to God and to his fellow-men.

The artist who has studied the rules of painting or of sculpture is afterwards able, it may be, to

"Snatch a grace beyond the reach of art."

So, over and above the knowledge of *general* physiology and hygiene, there is a peculiar physiology and hygiene that each man is to make up and use for himself. There are things that he can do which some cannot; and there are indulgences which he cannot permit to himself without harm. The coffee, a healthful stimulant to one man, is almost a poison to another. Drank at an evening gathering, it is sure to bring a night's unrest and feverishness and irritability on the following day. The late supper that one carries off easily, will disqualify his friend for to-morrow's business or devotion. The narcotic which one takes with no present sense of harm, but which always subtracts from human life, and the use of which can be defended only on the plea of habit, is not a seemly thing for Christian lips. How ask others to leave the habit of taking the wine cup when one is himself a slave to the tobacco habit! A man is to honour his body. Through it, as his instrument held under firm control, he is to do his life-work out in the world. He is to find out how best to use it; what it needs and does not need; what of activity or of repose it must have to do the work to which he puts it; what food, in kind, in quantity, is

best for him as brain-worker or worker with the hand. And so he is to be an artist in the high art of caring for the body which God has made, and which, when made, God has given him to prize and honour, to nourish and develop, to train, and, when trained, to use not as a beast of burden, but as a sacred part of his own being.

And this broad duty to one's self includes also care for the *mind*. There must be no materialism in our view of the mind if we are to respect ourselves at all. The body cannot be resolved into the mind, as some would fain do. No more can the mind be resolved into the body, as some naturalists of eminence would have us believe. The metaphysician would see only thought; the naturalist, only matter. Both theories of man are equally hostile to religion. An eminent scientist has lately expressed the hope "that we shall soon find a mechanical equivalent for consciousness." On the ground of self-respect, *we* hope that this may never be. As against the metaphysician, we insist that the body is more than his idea of it. As against the naturalist, we insist that there are mental facts that his retort and scalpel cannot touch. Each class of facts stands on its own unmoved foundation. The philosophers who once denied the existence of matter have retreated from the absurdity of pushing their system to cover all the facts about the complex being we call man. They have been willing to allow that there is something outside their specialty. And the naturalists, later in the field, and attempting just as vainly as did the metaphysicians to cover all the broad ground with one department of anthropology, will be compelled soon to follow the same course. If, indeed, it can be shown that successive eras of creation exhibit progress as matter is more and more sublimated in connection with the higher forms of the animal creation; if it can be shown that the

process advances, until in its highest reach there is found physical substance fit for a body which is to be the tabernacle of a human soul, still there is the amazing gap between the highest form of matter and the lowest form of human consciousness. It is a gap so broad that no transition from the one to the other is possible; for neither has a single quality or attribute in common. One has hardness or softness; is weighed by balances or measured by the yard; is of this or the other colour; is touched by the hand and seen by the eye. The other has its thoughts and feelings, loves and hates, its desire and will; its reasonings about what is true; its conscience about what is right; is known to us by the self within us, and is seen by the soul's eye turned inward and examining one's own central and essential consciousness. These two parts of ourself, so totally unlike in every quality, are held together by Him who made us. The link of their union is hidden in His hand, and by the very terms of the union it cannot be understood by us. It is the characteristic of a healthy mind, in the presence of a fact which by the very terms of its existence is inscrutable to us as finite beings, not to hold it with any the less reverence or certainty because of that mystery. We believe in God. We believe also in man, "made in the image of God." But as to the mode of existence, both of God and of man, there is always mystery.

"Reverence thyself," was the motto of the ancient learning. It savours of pride for one to say it who does not also say "reverence God." Never is man so great as when we see him not alone, but leaning on God,—the sonship related to the Fatherhood. In reaching our highest knowledge of Him we climb by the way of our powers as men. Divine attribute, in our conception, is the expansion of human faculty. Else how our idea of

God? Great are the achievements of the human mind. Man has gone down deep into the earth. He has pointed the artillery of astronomical invention towards the very skies from a thousand observatories all over the earth. He has mapped out the heavens and thrown the lines of gigantic boundary from star to star and from sun to sun. He is the Lord of the world. He has given names to the beasts of the field and to the birds of the air and to the fish of the sea. He can even "call the stars his own." "Thou madest him to have dominion over all the works of thy hands: thou hast put all things under his feet; all beasts of the field and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas."

And how does this pure and large self-regard stand related to that part of our nature that we call the *soul?* This is our crowning glory. We have in this soul the powers for doing the highest form of *moral work*,—work akin to the highest work done by our God. This sense of *the right* that is in every man is as really a fact as is the sense of seeing or feeling; this whole vast world of thought and emotion expressed by that grandest of all words, the word *ought*, when a man says, "I ought to do this or that thing,"—these *moral ideas* are our birthright as men with souls. Herein lies our solemn responsibility. The soul is regal as to the body. And among the soul's powers conscience is king by a divine right. All else in body and soul must bow to it. But it is never to bow to them. It is to keep its allegiance solely for its God.

And now we are prepared for one great question. What is all this wondrous and perfect combination of powers intended to accomplish? What is man for? These powers do not exist merely for themselves. The machine does not run for the sake of running. There is an end to be gained. What is it? These powers are not

simply to be used, but to be used in a certain way. The *right* use of them for the *right* ends,—if we can know that, then we can say why man was made and what man is to do.

Let us open the Bible. Over and over again we find a certain word,—the word *life*. What does it mean? In nature, a tree is alive when it does what it was made to do; and it is dead when it feels not responsively the call of the sun and the rain in the spring-time, when it puts forth no leaf in summer. It may exist as a thing when it is no longer alive. So of the human body: when it is doing the work a body ought to do, it is alive; when the heart ceases to beat and the breath to come and go, and the eye to see and the ear to hear, when no function is performed, it is still a body, but it is a dead body. In the same way a man's mind may be called dead to this or that class of subjects in which it takes no interest. The mind exists for other things; it is dead to these. In the same way the soul has powers. They always exist; for it is of their nature to live as it is of the nature of an eye to see. But there may be whole classes of facts to which the soul is dead, and these may be the very things in view of which it was especially to act. The mere organism of the soul is imperishable. Its faculties have no grave in which they can be laid. But it can perish from the *kind of life* it was to have: it can cease from doing what God made it to do. Its faculties may exist when its moral life—its proper action towards things right and holy—has ceased. In this sense the Bible speaks of men as "dead" and as "alive." And here comes out that grand and rich use of the word *life*. And here, too, there rises on us the answer to the question which we have asked as to what is to be done to develop all these vast powers of man. These powers are for the *spiritual life*.

Let us be sure that we understand what is meant by the spiritual life. It is vastly more than the mere possession of spiritual powers. These *exist*, even when they work wrongly or do not work at all. No part of a man may be dead in the sense of ceasing to be, and yet every part may be dead in the sense of not being or doing as God would have the man to be or to do. Nothing else but this kind of life can fill out to their roundness the powers God has given. Apart from this no man can do the best for himself. Apart from this every faculty must be dwarfed from its designed stature. This spiritual life is the one thing needful.

And when this thing is clearly seen, a man becomes anxious to *obtain* this boon. Painful is the discovery of one's need of this inward life. It is humiliating to find that one has never had the right view of the great object of existence; that one is in need of that inward disposition which prompts him to use rightly his own being, —in need of a new heart, a regeneration, a life from the dead. By one's own reason and conscience, by the faculties which belong to his nature, a man can judge whether this spiritual life is in his soul. If not, no duty can be so central, so important, as to *seek* it. Nor need our search be long. Close to us, in this gospel day, there stands One who is the giver of spiritual life. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." He who said, "I am the Truth," said also, "I am the Life." Through Him is the gift of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." And so it comes to be true that as a soul believes, doing thus its work, the Holy Spirit regenerates, doing thus His work. And yet our work of faith is also done under the Spirit's impulse, so that the whole work is a spiritual

work. And in this experience of "entering into the kingdom of God," what a sense of the soul's worth is developed! A man's soul then seems to him to be his all. It is his capital for eternity. That unsaved, vainly are there promises of an eternal joy. In that hour, when mightily moved upon by God's Holy Spirit, a man prizes his own soul; he begins to value himself. A great God, a great Saviour, and a great redemption are truths that go well with that of a great soul. And this sense of the value of one's own soul comes not from any new cataloguing of its powers, but from the sense of the great work given a human soul to do on earth, as it is here to prepare for an immortal destiny. And this spiritual life once obtained is to be carefully *preserved.* Self-preservation is one of the principles that overrides everything else. Done in self-defence, the blow that else were a murderous blow is not only guiltless of blame, but it may even be commendable. If another threatens my life I must resist him. I must at any cost preserve my own. But can any man show cause why the same law does not hold with reference to this spiritual life? I defend my dwelling against the midnight burglar. Shall I take no pains to defend my soul against the miscreant thought of evil that would come into my inner home and rob me of my soul's peace? And so in this law of *self-preservation* there is another test of what a Christian may or may not do. Does this course of reading, does the other course of pleasures, does that plan of social life which many claim is innocent, and which has the sanction of good men,—does any one of these things harm the inward spiritual life? Is one less inclined to read God's Word, to prayer, to the whole line of private and public religious duties thereby? That is enough. There is danger there. Either the thing is wrong in kind or in degree. There is no fit treatment for

any foe to the spiritual life, but to thrust it out. Better be too strict, better miss here and there a permitted pleasure, than to be injured in the hidden life. For to retain "the peace of God" in the soul is the very first thing. "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." A broad and wise self-regard says to the Christian that anything that disturbs, dwarfs, injures in any way this precious inward life, is by that very fact a sin, and it must be refused, repulsed, forbidden; and this prohibition is just as forcible a command for one's soul as if written out in full in the Decalogue. Nor are our ordinary worldly cares hostile to our best religious life. Nor is the necessary business in which hand or brain is called to act an hindrance to this spiritual growth. "Earthly care may be a heavenly blessing." But the whole brood of worldly pleasures, of doubtful pursuits, of enterprises that are obviously on the edge of evil, if not over that edge,—these things that we would not care to face in the honesty of closet devotion are all wrong when we adjudge them by the simple and positive rule of avoiding what will hinder the growth of the spiritual life. Another man might be able to do an act with no detriment to his spiritual life that would be for harm to my religious welfare. As there are some substances that, taken into the stomach, are always and in every case poisonous, and as there are other substances always and in every case nutritious, so it is in the soul. There are acts always to be condemned. There are acts always to be done. But between the two there is a vast debatable ground. And here, what is right and what is wrong is to be decided, in part at least, by the tendency of an act to harm or help the higher life. We are to watch that "no man take our crown."

And the principle of self-regard is not only our defence against foes, but our help in an offensive warfare. We are under duty of *self-development.* These powers are not only to be kept intact from evil, but to become sharpened by practice of the good. The seed is to have not only place to sprout and lift up itself from the soil, but the sapling is to have room to be the giant oak. None of us should measure the spiritual life, saying about it that it can be only thus and so on earth. There is vastly more to be gained than we may at first be ready to allow. Out upon the prairie goes the settler, selecting lands that are in their undisturbed wildness. They are only waste lands now. With difficulty he makes his first clearing. Early and late he labours. Each season shows an advance. His early clearing in a few years is enlarged in every direction; until at last he stands up, and, as far as eye can reach, are seen his broad acres rich in the golden-headed wheat. And what has he done in all this but simply to reclaim waste land? Is there no waste mind that needs a similar treatment? Are there not thousands of men with undisciplined minds, with hearts in which there grow only the rank weeds of worldliness, hearts in which there is room, could the reclaiming grace of God be brought to them, for rich harvests of that grain that is for the heavenly garner? And as each man looks over his own soul, takes the inventory of his own powers, estimates at its true value the culture he has given them, inquires as to his skilled use of them in noble moral work, has he not reason, in the sincere regret he must feel for the past, and in the possibilities open to him in the future, to devote himself, body, mind, and soul, more fully to that service of God which is the best development of all the powers of man?

And is there anywhere else a true development and

expansion of one's self? How else than through God's touch of us, and our recognition of Him, can we make the most and best of self? How sad the sight of a man with royal powers, and no sense of what they are, and of what he may do with them! He has not the "steeds well in hand." They may either not go at all, or they may dash headlong over some precipice. How many lives there are that seem left to accident—lives that have no force, or, if any force, it is misdirected—lives that are wind-borne and wave-driven, that roll and drift on the latest surge! And there are narrow lives, that lack the breadth of view which takes in God and eternity. In such narrow and merely secular lives, one hour spent with God would broaden consciousness more than anything else. Souls, in order to the fulness of their own faculty, must be receptive of God, of the power of the thought of Him, and of the Holy Spirit which He bestows on those that seek Him. We know our own spirits only as we know Him who is the "Father of spirits." Then we feel the family relation, and thus come to know who and what we are. Only as we know Him do we come to know how great a thing it is to have an immortal soul. One may be able to name all the soul's powers—to state the most advanced theories of the science of man. And yet this is only the intellectual knowledge of our moral powers. But the moral knowledge—the soul's knowledge of soul—is known only as we see the soul's duty and capacity "in the light of God." One is no more puny and insignificant. A *soul* is the grandest thing now, after God. The thought of the vastness of the material universe and the minuteness of man before the majesty of nature in her uplifted mountains, her broad oceans, her heavens studded thick with innumerable stars and with *systems* of vast elaboration—these things once were

oppressive. But now the really oppressive thing is *a soul*, and this soul one's own soul. For those are without us; but this is the very self within one's self. Those things are of coarse material; this of the finest. They are to pass away; this never. They will crumble and *not know it;* but this shall know if harm comes, and, knowing that harm comes only by sin, the soul can avoid it through the grace of God.

Who has not seen this uplifting of the whole man—this new sense of the worth of a human being—as he has seen a convert struggling into God's kingdom? Why, sometimes there has been almost a new dignity to the very step, a new light in the eye, a new valuation of self as before God. The man who had vegetated before begins now to live. It is almost as if he had just come into possession of a soul, and gloried in the newly-found dignity. In the act of becoming a Christian, he has become a man; for the true manhood of a man is found in being a "son of God." And, while other ways of coming to prize one's self, the ways of study or of comparison, give one breadth without depth or height, this kind of knowledge of self, this gospel method, gives growth in every direction. It gives the upward growth; for it sets God before us, and turns every outreaching tendril of human desire towards Him, as the One by whom we may be lifted up into the purer sunlight of the heaven where He dwells. It gives depth to one's development. We are filled with humility; we are bowed in penitence under a sense of sin; we cry unclean; we go down into the depths; we see our deserts; we learn that only such mercy as God has shown in Jesus can save such sinners as ourselves. We get a sight of the singular workings of sin in us. There are "studies in human nature" here, when we are bowed before God in contri-

tion, that are furnished nowhere else. The plainest man on his knees sees further into human nature than the philosopher when standing on proudest tiptoe. And the human nature into which he sees is his own soul. The mysterious bondage of a soul in evil, the mysterious methods of God's grace in freeing it from this bondage, the experiences of a soul in the pangs of a spiritual birth as it comes into the kingdom of God—these are the deeper facts of self-knowledge that none can know except as "taught of God." And so the motto, "know thyself," on Christian lips is the language not of boasting, but of humility. It is the deeper word of that deeper development which, in knowing one's God, gets a deeper knowledge of one's self. For it is not by comparing our powers with those of other men, nor by measuring man's littleness as against the majesty of God's works, or even as against the majesty of God Himself, that we get at true humility. Those forms of comparison may mortify without giving us a true abasement. But when we see how holy God is, how pure, how just; when not only the majesty of His attributes awes us, but the splendour of His perfections rises on our vision; and when we see what we should be before Him, then we bow low in penitence, and at the same time rise high in our aspiration after Him. So the penitent's prayer, though it springs from the very dust, yet mounts up, as it goes on, into heaven itself. In sinking lowest it rises highest. God, in converting a man, causes the man to take deep soundings in the inner sea of self-knowledge. We get more of enlargement. There is more capacity for loving as one's soul is exercised under the love of God. So that the largest self-love should lead one to seek out and bathe himself in the Divine love.

It is a happy circumstance that, in making provision

for the soul's growth, we have in our hands the Word of God. Its doctrines tend mightily to develop the soul. Here a man may take exercise as in a spiritual gymnasium. It will give a man moral muscle to use himself amid these things of God. How the whole world opens itself anew to the man who becomes spiritually minded! How broad a theatre is the universe for the displays of God's wisdom, love, power, and grace! Let others study only the questions of chemistry, the problems of animal and vegetable life. Let them go down to the core of the earth, or pierce the sky with telescopic tube. Such studies enlarge the intellect; they have even a reflected glory of God in them. An eye, couched of its natural film, may see God's thought in these things. The theatre was plainly built for the drama; it is well to note that. But how much better it is to see the drama itself; to look not upon the mere boarding and nails of the universe; to mark not only how well the stage is built, but to see the actors, and mark the developing plot! Who are the actors? *God* and *souls*. He is revealing His plan in history, in providence, in redemption, and men are coming out and going on and over the stage; but meeting and solving also, for better or for worse, the very gravest questions that involve an eternity. And in these great themes one comes to be at home. Amid these thoughts of God one finds a singular charm for the mind and the heart. This is the atmosphere in which the soul expands. And this "kingdom of God," into the purposes of which we are admitted through the Scriptures, is the kingdom that takes in all other kingdoms; that is the reason why the vegetable and animal kingdoms exist. The knowledge that covers all other forms is the knowledge of God and His purposes. The *spiritual* kingdom, composed of all souls that have the *spiritual life*, is the kingdom in the interests of which

God rules and overrules all things. Into that kingdom the regenerate enter by virtue of their spiritual birth. But there are provisions for their growth from birth to full manhood. Just as far and as fast as they are able to do it, God, the Sovereign of this kingdom, calls his sons to share with Him in its cares, and administer its high concerns. "I appoint unto you a kingdom; ye shall sit on thrones." This is surely the very highest development. To do this is to do the grandest thing for one's self.

V.

THE DUTY WE OWE TO OTHERS.

THE PRINCIPLE OF DOING GOOD TO OTHERS—THE CONSECRATION OF THE NATURAL IMPULSE — THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF MAN'S WORTH—THE SCRIPTURE METHOD OF TEACHING IMMORTALITY—THE APPLIANCES OF OUR AGE.

ON a wreck, the rescuing party could find at first only a single survivor. As they were lifting the benumbed and starving sailor over the side and into the boat, they saw his lips move. They bent their ears down close to him. He hoarsely whispered a single sentence, and could say no more, "*There's another man!*" They searched again. They found the man, and he was also rescued. Why those words about "the other man?" That sailor so nearly left to die was no relative of the one first discovered. The two men had had no special interest in each other. The man who had told of "the other man" was not moved thereto by any Christian principle. He was coarse, brutal, profane. He hated every thing like religion; he never mentioned Christ's name save in an oath. Why that plea for the other man? It was a natural, though an unconsecrated impulse. It was the great instinct of human brotherhood asserting itself. It was the natural love of one's own kind. It was an intuition almost anterior to reason, and independent of it. So, with no time for reasoning about his act as wise or unwise, no time for

any thought about possible consequences to himself, a man has sometimes leaped from a wharf to seize a drowning child, or into the midst of a crowded street to rescue some little waif from under the wheels that in another second would have crushed out its young life. We praise the bravery of the act, and none the less do we recognise the instinct of humanity that prompts it. For there is a deep-down relationship of man to man, of each one to the whole race. "The other man" is a brother-man.

This instinct of our human nature, religion takes up with her sanctifying touch. God's command recognises the *human* in man. It does not call the natural impulse holy, for it is not of itself holy. There is no holiness in a bird's love for her nest of young birds; no holiness in the love of the lioness for her cubs. The bird and beast have no moral nature that can take up this natural instinct and sanctify it. But what bird and beast cannot do, we as men can accomplish. We can make this care for our own kind a holy thing. It is ours to lift this instinct into a virtue; to make this impulse a principle; to love "the other man," not only as a brother-man with a body, but as one who has a mind and a soul, and is being made in God's image and redeemed with Christ's blood, and who is a candidate for glory and joy eternal.

This kind of love for men—so broad, so deep, so high, so peculiar—is God's gift at a Christian's conversion. It is the "fruit of the Spirit;" it is not natural to any human heart. No man shall ever be able to reason himself into this peculiar feeling—the Christian affection—for the race. True, by careful thought on man's relation to man, this love may be broadened and deepened. But love does not start at the call of reason. It is its own reason, as it is its own impulse. You cannot make it to order; you cannot

wave a magician's wand over the abyss of human feeling and bid the soul to love; or if you issue the command, the feeling will not come. God is holy, and through the grace of the gospel, man may be. Like the holy love of a renewed heart to the holy God, this holy love towards men is a divine gift. The two forms of love are inseparable; they are at root one,—the love for holiness. They have the same source; they run on side by side, the one being always the measure of the other. And so heaven is not only loving God and being with Him, but it is also being with the saints made perfect. Hence John, the Apostle of love, put the love of God and the love of man together. Loving man whom we have seen is proof of loving God whom we have not seen. If one say that he loveth God and hate his brother, he is a liar. And so, in the Decalogue the two stand side by side as well as in the Epistle; and we read, "thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself" in the one; and in the other we read that "he who loveth God (should) love his brother also, for love is of God." Religion in experience is more than a private thing between God and a man's own soul. A Christian is a man who not only has a closet in which to pray, but a broadly-peopled world in which to exercise a loving soul. Just by virtue of being a Christian he must give room to this love of God and this love of his fellow-men. And in determining his duty, in asking whether this or that thing can be rightfully done, he needs not always ask about texts of Scripture, but he can use this principle of *love for others*. "Will this thing harm them? Will that course of life lead them to think less of religion? Will the influence of this or that act be beneficial to those who must see or know it? Will it help or harm them as men with souls over whom I am bound to exert a Christian influence?"

And when to the *first* of these principles, that of "pleading Christ," and to the *second* of these principles, that of a "true self-regard," we add this *third* principle of "*doing good* through the impulses of Christian love to our fellowmen," there is found a series of tests that we may easily and constantly apply to our life, and even in uncommanded things we shall seldom be at a loss as to how one can be a "Christian in the world."

It might seem, at first, as if the merely natural impulse that led the sailor to whisper to his deliverers "there is another man," was an impulse of as high a grade as that of the disciple of Christ. Certainly it acts, as in the case just named, with sudden power. We do not undervalue it. We praise it. But mark (1), that it is not of the same *kind* as the Christian impulse: that (2) it does not stop to weigh things. A rope thrown to the drowning boy would have saved him as certainly did the needless imperilling of life: and (3) the Christian impulse often has all the suddenness of the natural impulse, which men always so much admire; and then it has, in addition, that steadiness of aim and that patience of endeavour which nothing but the religious motives can impart. A few years since, when three million freedmen were thrown on our hands to educate and prepare for citizenship, all men at the North who had one spark of natural philanthropy were interested in the work. How the contributions flowed in! It was a beautiful sight. But how soon the ardour abated! The spasm was over. And to-day the thing has come back to the Churches. The mere natural impulse has mainly ceased. But religious men have taken up and are carrying on the work. By the education which they are giving to coloured preachers in the various colleges and institutes, they are steadily lifting up the *coloured* people of the South. Those who were to do it

by schools apart from religion, and who depended on the natural benevolence of the North, are disheartened. But never was Christian philanthropy doing more than to-day for these freedmen. The same thing is seen in the missionary cause. The steady contributions, year after year, of converted men who aim to lift the nations by seeking their religious welfare, are a proof of the permanent force that is found only in the *religious* impulse.

God has an order in this thing. We might think that it would be better to have men first ripened and broadened in knowledge, and then, when the wood has been piled on the altar, to have the heavenly fire descend on all this prepared material, and the last and best gift of a Christian impulse given to a thoroughly furnished man. But no. God's order is first the converted heart; first, the *love for man* given in conversion, and then, the knowledge of what are men's needs and the great world's great wants. He takes a frivolous young man or woman whose only care had been for dress. By the power of the Holy Spirit that frivolous soul is sobered, is converted, has shed abroad in it the "love of God." Instantly there is a new affection for men; a new sense of relationship to others; a spiritual sense of the need of saving "the other man." God's order in preparing a man for doing good is to put this peculiar and sacred sense of *love for men* into the soul. The man's heart begins to enlarge. Every man is his neighbour, to be loved as he loves himself. The heart goes out to others. The race-bond is felt. One is thus born into the feeling of human brotherhood. Said a man, telling of his conversion, "I had been reared to have an interest in every benevolent enterprise. I had given something more or less to them. But when I felt this religious change towards God, suddenly my heart grew large and warm towards every living man.

I seemed to throw my arms about every one in any need, and longed to benefit him. It was a feeling of which until that hour I had no idea. I began to ask how I could benefit my fellow-men. My heart yearned to do them good. The change of my feelings towards God was hardly more marked than was this change of feeling towards men." There is no magic about it. The new heart under the guidance of the converting Spirit, "sees all things new," and hence its feelings towards men are new. It would do them good. It would help them. Nor is this done so much from duty as from impulse. Rules have their place. But their use is not so much *in* as *after* conversion. Beginning with rules, one's religion is precise, hard, dry, mathematical. It lacks spontaneity. It is correct, but lifeless. It is in one's conscience more than in one's heart. It is bondage rather than freedom. But when love has entered, when the touch of life is given, when Christ is revealed to the soul as "the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world," then rules come to be of use; then we can look upon the law of duty, and see that we are also commanded to "love our neighbour as ourselves." God's order is to give the hearty love of the thing commanded, and to set the commandment itself before our willing hearts, and then to show us that obedience is "well pleasing unto the Lord." And when this principle of loving men and helping them is established in the heart, there is a sort of sagacity in seeing the thing to be done. In this it is exactly as it is in a family where there are certain rules of social life that no one is to violate. But sympathetic souls in the family hardly ever think of the rules. They understand what will please each other, how to help each other. The love that really cares for others' good has a sort of in*genuity* in striking out courses of action that will please

and help. Its sympathies are its reasons for what it does. And the arrow thus driven seldom misses the mark.

In doing men good, there is to be also a sense of the *worth of a man.* It is true that those whose hold on religion is slight, and even those who have let go of it altogether, have much to say about the dignity of the human race. It would sometimes seem that what they say in this line is a sort of compensation to their own reason and judgment for the tendency which they feel inheres in their theories—the tendency to belittle man. Is it that in their words of honour they are unconsciously truer to the manhood in their souls than they are when they propound their speculations about man as developed from the ape? This, at least, is certain, that the drift of not a little that takes on the airs and uses the phrases of science does not tend to make us feel the worth of a man. Hugh Miller's words deserve to be pondered to-day even more than when he wrote them. He says: "And thus though the development theory be not atheistic, it is at least practically tantamount to atheism. For if man be a dying creature, restricted in his existence to the present scene of things, what does it really matter to him, for any one moral purpose, whether there be a God or no? If in reality on the same religious level with the wolf, dog, and fox, that are by nature atheists—a nature most properly coupled with irresponsibility—to what one practical purpose should he know or believe in a God whom he, as certainly as they, is never to meet as his Judge; or why should he square his conduct by the requirements of the moral code further than a low and convenient expediency may chance to demand?" And not more surely does this theory "crowd God away till His great orb loses all sensible diameter" than it dwarfs man by crowding away his moral nature until he is nearer to the beast below than

to the God and Father above him. Theories of God and of man go together in the sceptical view; and they go downward together. Theories of God and of man go together in the Christian view; and they go upward together.

The great factor in estimating man's worth is his *moral* nature. His body is small beside that of the elephant; his locomotive powers feeble compared with those of many of the lower animals. Man is redeemed from his littleness partially by his better intellect, but mainly by his moral nature—his capacity to know the right, to enter into the thought and plan of his God. This last endowment is his main distinction. About this island of his being flow those separating seas which will compel men to make always a distinction between a beast and a man.

Have you ever thought of the peculiar way in which the Bible teaches of man's *moral worth?* It does not do it by any elaborate description of his faculties. The Bible has no scheme of mental philosophy to cramp its religious teaching and colour its doctrinal statements. It has no eloquent eulogium on the greatness of man. But it does more and better than that. It tells what kind of *moral work* man is to do; of the repentance he can feel for wrong doing, and how God will accept that repentance; of the faith he may exercise; of the love he may have for his God; of the tender sympathy of sonship with the infinite Father, and the delightful allegiance to the great spiritual and eternal kingdom of God in heaven. The work to be done by man shows the powers of the being who is to do it. The great act shows the great actor. The glory and dignity of man is that he is great enough to hold fellowship with God; to think His thoughts, enter into His plans, and be a voluntary worker with Him. It

is this distinctively religious view that makes man of so much worth.

And exactly as the greatness of man is taught in a peculiar way in the Bible, so it is with his immortality. Not a single text teaches a *bare* immortality — a characterless soul with an eternal existence. Joy is eternal. Woe is unending. Holiness endures for ever. Sin is the undying worm. It is always the *state* that is immortal — the state of joy or doom. And man is not in the Bible simply in the process on unto immortality, as the apostles of natural religion teach us, but he is a candidate for the eternal *joy* or *woe*. These are the eternal things. These are the immortal states. And of course they carry with them the immortality of the *man* who is to enter one or the other of these immortal *states*. Says another: "It was not the mission of Christ or His Apostles to expatiate on any abstract or naked doctrine of immortality — an immortality considered apart from its moral relations. They have nothing to say about an abstract immortality which no one will ever experience — a meaningless immortality. They proclaim endless holiness and well-being or everlasting sin and woe as depending on faith and repentance exercised here. They never tell men so little as the bare, bald fact that they shall exist hereafter. They tell them a great deal more. They tell them abundantly how they shall exist." [1]

And is not this way of teaching man's immortality — the teaching of the immortality of the state in which he is to exist — a way far superior to that of the best philosophers and poets? The world's ablest reasoners are right as far as they go in teaching an immortality for the soul. But the Scripture conception of the state as the immortal thing is peculiarly impressive. Had mere

[1] Prof. Bartlett, in "Life and Death Eternal."

philosophers, from Plato to Hamilton, written our Bible, they would have used the phrase, "an immortal soul." But how thin and poor the phrase compared with the Scripture phrases which tell us of the kind of immortality that is for every man! The philosophers' phrase is right enough. It exactly expresses their doctrine as opposed to the infidel doctrine of a mortal soul. It is the exact affirmation of the truth so far as it stands up against the sceptic's denial. But, after all, it is a mere logical phrase—blank, bald, characterless, while the Scripture form is bold, full, specific, dealing as it does with the state of this immortality — its quality, its condition, as good or bad, joyous or terrible.

So, too, the poets of the race sing of the immortal soul of man. They have in mind the outer fact, the mere shell of the great fruitage—immortality as an abstract thing. Even this has in it grandeur, and shows the worth of man. It is not pride that makes men hold to the idea of an endless being. As sinners, men have reasons for denying the instinct, if that were successfully possible. Fear, and dread, and the universal feeling that to be immortal is to be under the necessity of meeting God as one's Judge—these things all make men wish to deny the fact of future life. But the shrinking from annihilation is an instinct—an instinct strengthened by reason. The great master of English song has it,—

> "If the breath
> Be life itself, and not its task and tent,
> If even a soul like Milton's can know death;
> O man! thou vessel purposeless, unmeant,
> Blank accident, nature's anomaly!
> Go weigh thy dreams, and be thy hopes, thy fears,
> The counterweights! Thy laughter and thy tears
> Mean but themselves, each fittest to create
> And to repay each other! Why rejoices

Thy heart with hollow joy for hollow good?
Why cowl thy face beneath a mourner's hood?
Image of image, ghost of ghostly elf,
That such a thing as thou feel'st warm or cold?
Be sad! Be glad! Be neither! Seek or shun!
Thou hast no reason why! Thou canst have none!
Thy being's being is a contradiction!"

Or, in calmer moods, with less feeling of indignation, and more readiness to hear the careful statement of the reasons for the coming life, we listen to another priest of song,[1]—

"It must be so. Plato, thou reasonest well!
Else why this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
This longing after immortality?
'Tis the divinity that stirs within us.
The stars shall fade away, the sun himself
Grow dim with age, and Nature sink in years,
But *thou* shalt flourish in immortal youth,
Unhurt amid the war of elements,
The wreck of matter, and the crash of worlds!"

Poetry and philosophy teach of man's worth because of the eternal endurance of his faculties. There is grandeur in the thought of an existence that runs on parallel with that of God. They utter their protest both on the ground of reason and of morality against the idea that when the righteous die or the wicked die, that is the last of either or of both. If the wicked have nothing to fear, they will sin with stouter heart and not repent at all. If the good have nothing to hope for beyond, the trials that are incident to goodness, and which would never come but for goodness, will not be borne, but men will be tempted to shirk the goodness in order to escape the self-denials of the narrow way. So says philosophy. So says common sense. How inexpressible the vanity of man if not immortal!

[1] Addison, in "Cato."

But while reason and common sense can say all this, they say little or nothing that really moves our hearts. They stir our wonder. "How great, how grand, how awful a thing it is to be an immortal!" they say. We are amazed at ourselves. But all this does not stir the soul as does the Scripture mode of teaching. God's Word describes the state of joy or of woe that is unending. We look in upon the glory of the heavenly city. We see the harpers and hear the hymn. The words of the song come across the separating spaces, and we catch the strains of the chorus as they ascribe "honour and power and blessing and glory to him that sitteth on the throne." And this intense and holy life is the eternal life. And over against this state is the other; and every figure of woe is used! and this death to all goodness is "the second death." And the two states are represented as enduring for ever. And for the one or for the other, every man is living. Who, then, can tell the worth of a man when we look out at him through the lens of God's Word! We are more than awed by the spectacle. We are touched in our tenderest feelings. It is a living man who shall go into one of these states of joy or grief. What words can set forth the value of a human being! Never once do the sacred writers attempt it. They use the tenderest appeals; they set forth the atoning blood, the infinite blessing of a Holy Spirit's work on the soul; they invite, warn, persuade, — but there they leave it. They only say, "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

And this is not the exceptional endowment o here and there a choice and peculiar man. Each man is a candidate for the blessed life in heaven. He was made for that. He has powers for that. Christ has died in order *to that.* The terrible fact of sin has come in. It threatens

to destroy all our power for happiness in God, and so to render the soul a castaway. But as an outcast even, there is a terrible grandeur to a man. In ruins this temple is grander than other temples in their completeness.

And so, wherever you find him, high or low, young or old, black or white, bond or free, the human being is a being of inexpressible worth. And the worth of him is not any mere bodily worth, nor yet that of mere mental faculty. His worth is that, as a moral being, he is in a *moral state that endures for ever.*

See yonder majestic steamship. She was built to breast the strongest wave of the stormy Atlantic. Four thousand years of naval architecture culminate in her form. The skill of the long generations of mankind, as they have gained it by battling with the facts and forces of nature, are seen in her appointments. Even the most harmful things of the natural world are made helpful to her safety and speed. She is iron in her hull, iron in her spars, iron in her very cordage. But the iron swims in the new miracle as in the old. Every appliance of art is seen in her machinery. Every luxury of modern life is found in her cabins. She cuts her way in the pathless sea, and leaps, a thing of life, from wave to wave. She seems almost to be conscious of an inward power, and you can hear the throb of the great iron heart that beats within. She is one of the most wonderful things that man ever made. And yet that little emigrant child that crouches yonder by the hatchway and looks down with great astonished eyes on the monster engine below,—that little child is a vastly greater wonder than anything about the ship. There was the unfathomable mystery of its birth, the greater mystery of the union of its body with its soul, the mystery of its moral nature that is to detect

the right and the wrong, and is to act eternally. And this is the endowment of every human being.

On one occasion they came to Jesus asking His aid. They said "he was worthy" for whom they asked that thing. Man is worthy of all our acts of kindness. He is worth being rescued from the sad slavery of vicious habit; from the sensualism that drags him down; from the sorrow that wastes him here and threatens him hereafter.

> "The soul of man is larger than the sky,
> Deeper than ocean or the abysmal dark
> Of the unfathomed centre. Like that ark,
> Which in its sacred hold uplifted high,
> O'er the drowned hills, the human family,
> And stock reserved of every living kind,
> So in the compass of the single mind
> The seeds and pregnant forms in essence lie
> That make all worlds." [1]

Never was there such practical belief in the Christian worth of man as to-day. The doctrine of immortality is not kept for creeds. It does not lie on the shelf, a truth believed, but uninfluential. Men take it up. The Churches of Christ have made it a vital thing. The idea of saintship is no more that of some venerable monk repeating a hundred Paternosters per day. Saintship has its types in Henry Martyn and Adoniram Judson, as they labour for the minds and souls of degraded men. Man's worth grows larger the more Christ's sacrifice for man is appreciated. For it is now felt that we are never so much like Him as when we prize men enough to strive to save them from sin and death. Christians are loving the truth, as indeed they should do. But they are coming also to see that if they simply embalm the truth in "confessions of faith," they are not using it as God intended.

[1] H. Coleridge.

It is committed to our trust that with it we may do men good. To defend the truth that our brother man is not a brother beast but a brother immortal, is well. We owe it to him, to ourselves, to our God, that our theory of man be right. But to practice upon the truth of our brother's immortality by beginning already to prize him, to help him, to guide him, to save him,—this is to believe really in him as the inheritor of an eternity, as a being having capacity for everlasting joy in the love and service of God.

It might seem at first as if this view of man's worth, as it is chiefly the religious view, is to be used only in the line of our religious duties. But even when their religious welfare is the ultimate aim, the best way of approaching men is through their social and their business life. They are friends, neighbours, citizens. We are to know them in these relations ; and here, whensover we will, we may do them good. They and we are in the body. And through the body we reach the soul. The man who finds us kindly in the ministrations of sickness is the more ready to hear our words about the cure of sin and the better way of living. It must have been for this reason that the Master so often wrought miracles of healing. He could have summoned the people by His eloquence. Sermons like the Sermon on the Mount He could have spoken every day. That would have astonished and amazed men. They would have given Him the meed of their praise. But He would not have gained hearts. He would not then have left such an example on record to cheer the lowly soul that, in common life and by the ministries of patience and love, is trying to be like Him in doing men good. He recognized the relations of social life. He was a man with men. He felt the throb of human hearts. At Cana's marriage, at Nain's funeral,

on the cross in His words about His mother, He showed that His religion did not, in a fierce zeal for the future, forget the duties of this life. The ascetic of the second and third centuries would have trampled on all these relations. What! a man present at a marriage feast when he should be at the great work of saving souls from death! A man dying, and just about to enter eternity, and caring about such a paltry thing as how his mother should get her daily bread! As if the saving of the soul were inconsistent with the innocent festivity of a marriage, or with the care for the bodily wants of the living! Better and truer and more Christlike is the view that sanctifies social and business life,—that does not say this thing is secular, and to be done as a matter of wordly policy, and that thing is religious, and to be done on Christian principles. Better to say that all life, social and religious, is Christian. And in it all and through it all men are to be reached and good is to be done unto them. When Napoleon saw his artillery firing with little or no success at the Russians who were crossing the river upon the ice, he bade them fire into the air, so that the shot, dropping in front and breaking the ice, should hinder their advance. The experiment was a success. So, often in the work of doing men good, we may gain indirectly what we could never gain by the direct assault. The miracle of healing at the hands of Christ opened the heart to the word of His grace. The kind act of the Christian has dissolved the prejudice and gained a hearing for the religion that was thus commended. The gunners of Napoleon were doing not less, but more, when they aimed into the air. Their object was the same. They were serving the cause.

And yet it will not do to keep in mind only the indirect *method*. What would have been the result if our Lord

had stopped with healing the sick and giving sight to the blind? We are to use the indirect methods; to use them wisely. But they are not enough alone. And we shall better use the indirect methods, if we are well practised in the positive and Christian work of labouring to make men the disciples of Christ. Each heart must touch a heart; each convert, gain a convert. To apply gospel truth to souls in need of it; to use social opportunities; to employ the intervals of business and of care in speaking to men of the claims of religion,—these are forms of direct labour that no one may neglect who lives to do good to his fellow-men.

A living *sympathy* with those we would help is a prime requisite. We are not, as from the superior position of culture or of religion, to harangue men. They resent our assumed superiority. The poorest man does not want to be patronised. He has his work to sell; the labour of his hands of which he wishes to dispose. He is a man, not a "hand." Or, if sick, and in need of temporary help, he is to be met as a man. For he feels that it is no disgrace to be sick, and therefore in need of another's kindness. He is saying to himself that but for this trouble he should be able to provide for himself. His self-respect, his manhood, must not be insulted by any Lord or Lady Bountiful. And, above all, when seeking to help men spiritually, to bring them into God's kingdom, there must be no offensive superiority. A man must put himself on the level of a sinner speaking to sinners. He is to commend God's grace. That grace saved him. And he is there to tell of that grace which is able also to save others. He is not there to speak of himself, but of Christ; not to tell of one's achievements, but of what help God furnishes in His gospel to needy souls. Nothing repels more than self-consequence, unless it be self-righteousness.

And there is also the matter of merciful judgment. We owe it to other men to be tender towards their faults. We may not, indeed, say that black is white; we may not confuse moral distinctions; we may not by excess of kindness take out of sin all its blame. But it is possible to hold the sinner blameworthy, and yet never use that severity of tone which might well become perfect men, but does not become us as those who are very far from perfection. We are not to lower the tone. Truth and righteousness are just as great and good and pure if there is not found anywhere a man to practice them. We are to keep high the standard. But faithfulness can be kindly; nay, it must be kindly to be faithful. A sick man, when asked to see a minister of religion, at once declined: "No," he said, "I don't want to be lectured." Absent for years from the sanctuary, and having little connection with religious men, he had obtained all his ideas of Christianity and of Christians from their enemies. He had come to think Christians, and especially the ministers of religion, a class who indulged the feeling that they were vastly better than others, and so would look down in scorn on common sinners. But at length he was persuaded to see the nearest minister. The clergyman, after kind and sympathetic inquiry about the man's sickness, passed on, naturally and easily, to speak of us all as diseased with sin, and all in need of God's mercy for forgiveness and renewing. The man listened with keenest interest; and when the pastor had gone, the sufferer, turning to a friend, said, "I thought he would lecture me; but he put himself on my level as a sinner, saying that we all were sinners. I want that man to call again." Mercy is never inconsistent with justice. Judgment of men is to be tender that it may be true; and it is more likely to be both when we count ourselves in with those we condemn; our infirmities, in some

other direction equalling, it may be, those of our erring neighbour and brother. "Be ye tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." There is a broad and beautiful knowledge of men as men; of the principles on which they act; of the motives that mix themselves so strangely in human souls. This shrewdness in sorting out the inner impulses of men is to be prized; it is not to be confounded with that low cunning by which some men are swift to detect the evil and slow to see the good in their fellow-men. There are narrow souls that have an affinity only for evil; they often claim an especial keenness in judging human nature. It is the principle of "rogue catching rogue because he knows the ways of a rogue." But the broad Christian knowledge of human nature, that which a "Christian in the world" ought to covet, is a knowledge not only of evil but of good. No good man can make a carrion crow of himself. If he is compelled to know some evil things of evil men, his tastes and his sympathies lead him to where he finds good things in good men,—sweet, blessed traits of character, heaven-born and heaven-bred qualities in souls that are heaven-bound.

Nor are we to know men only as single men, but men in the mass,—the men of our own age and the tendencies of our times. There are questions that belong to each generation; they are thrust on it by God himself: they must be met; they are not to be hindered. Men cry, "Don't agitate them;" and by this cry they are agitated all the more. Men say, "Don't press this or that reform, lest it should disturb Church or State." But it is of no use; the thing is in the air; the very stones will cry out if men will keep still; it gets itself taken up. If the right men will not take it up, then the wrong men will do it; if right-spirited men will not advocate it, men of harsh and

irritating speech—the natural iconoclasts born into every generation — will seize on it and lash every Christian laggard more severely than those guilty of the abuse they profess to oppose. Nor will it do, because in a republican government such questions have a political bearing as well as a moral, to remand them to the politicians. The right and the wrong in them is a matter to be decided by him who would be a "Christian in the world." He must not be caught napping; he must not let the "times go over him," and awake, after the question has been decided, to find that he has been on the wrong side, if on either. These questions have in them not barely an abstract right, but they touch men. These questions are often the culmination of the sorrows, the prayers, the tears, and sometimes the blood of holy, though hidden, souls. One must not ride a hobby; but the way to avoid the hobby is to have one aim in life,—an aim so large that we can say with Paul, "This one thing I do." It will do to be "a man of one idea" whenever that idea is a solar idea. There must be enough in it, as there is enough light in the sun, to shine on all things. "I am a man and am concerned in all that relates to mankind," said the Roman orator; and the theatre rung with the thunders of applause.

And just here is the test of any question that we have to meet. We are to ask always of its bearing on men,—on men as those who are ennobled and enriched in opportunity by the Gospel, and who must in no way be hindered from receiving and obeying the commands of Christ. The principles of religion do not change; but their application varies with the questions which, under different circumstances of human society, are ever rising to the surface. The supreme desire to benefit men through the Gospel of Jesus, and the constant practice

of looking at each thing as a help or hindrance to this great end, will be a guide to the earnest Christian.

And in this love for the race how is a man inspired by the great examples of the past? "There is nothing that will let the light into the soul like personal influence; nothing that can lift one up out of the darkness, and lead one into the divine and quickening light, and baptize one in the spirit of faith, hope, love, and charity, like the magic power of a great example; nothing that can inspire, exalt, and purify, like the magnetic rays of healing and helping that beam out of the eyes of noble men and women. If your life has been deep and broad in its experience, then you have seen lives that were better than yours; lives whose pure light shone upon you from a serener height than you could reach, and touched you and warmed you through and through; just as the drooping flowers, some chilly morning, have looked up through the thick fogs and caught a glimpse of the bright sun, which scatters the mists and opens the glad blossoms to the warm, life-giving light. Whose life is not, sometimes, wrapped around with fogs? Who has not looked up from his little life-world and seen no cheering sun above him,—nothing but a heavy, leaden sky hanging over? And then, perhaps, you have almost doubted the sun itself, doubted goodness and doubted God,—until you have seen the clouds break away, the fogs lift, and doubt vanish before the beautiful radiance of some shining example. I tell you that I believe, more and more, that what the world needs to reform and redeem it is holier, purer, diviner lives,—lives that shall be the light of men."

All the great examples of love for the race are seen coming to do obeisance to the one great Example. Lived they before or after, they lived with reference to Him.

He was the great ideal man of the ages before He came. He was the "Man," the ideal of all manhood, of whom David sang in the psalm where he makes man "to have dominion over all the works of God's hands, and all things are put under his feet." Abraham saw his day. Joseph was his type, as, indeed, in some single respect, were all the holy men of the former dispensation. All the prophets gave testimony to Him; and in all the civilized earth, since the day of Christ's appearing, every splendid instance of self-forgetful affection, every noble and generous deed in which any human heart has given loving proof of its devotion to others' good, has had a higher lustre in the eyes of the race by their recognition of that deed as *Christ-like*. In this matter there have been many teachers, but only one Master. He was the exemplification of His own command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

VI.

THE CHRISTIAN IN PRAYER.

THROUGH THE CLOSET INTO THE WORLD—PRAYER THE DICTATE OF GRATITUDE—PRAYER A COMMAND—PRAYER BRINGS THE PECULIAR GRACE OF GODLINESS—PRAYER A POWER TO BE USED FOR OUR FELLOW-MEN.

IT is said that there is a market-place in one of the Old World cities which can be approached only through the vestibule of a temple. If the fact be so, is there not in it this teaching, that business is to come after devotion? In the Sermon on the Mount, our Lord puts prayer in very much the same place. The order of His topics in that sermon is as much for our teaching as are its precepts. He lays down first of all the principles of religion in the Beatitudes. He advances next to the duty of each disciple to reflect upon the world the peculiar light of these principles. He then shows how His doctrine stands related to the old law. And thus He comes to the three duties of private or personal religion,—alms-giving, the amount to be determined in the closet; prayer, to be offered in private; and fasting, to be done alone with God. And then, and only then, does He take the disciple out into the world. Through these duties of private religion the Christian is to go out where men are laying up their treasures, and there he is so to use worldly things as to lay up treasure in heaven. Christ's order is through

the closet into the world ; from the place of prayer to the place of trade ; from the temple to the market.

Our philosophy of prayer need not be complicated. If there are difficulties about the hearing and answering of prayer, there are vastly more about prayer as not heard nor answered. God must hear because he is God. Can we ever communicate our wish to a friend, and God fail to hear the word we utter? How much less when we speak to God himself! What do men mean when they question whether God can hear prayer? Do they think they can utter a word so silently that He cannot hear it! Before we can enter any chamber of prayer He must be there to listen. He must hear, or He is not God. But will He *answer* the petition He hears? And why not? Is He not *able?* But, be it remembered that He is God. *Will* He do it? Again, He is God. Given a God like our God, and given also a man, a creature of want and dependence, made to cling as the climbing plants are made to cling to some support, made to pray, and sometimes forced by his necessities down upon his knees in supplication,—for this God to make this man as He has, and then refuse to hear his prayer, would task our faith more severely than any and all of the miracles and promises of the Bible. On the score of believing that which has the least difficulty, the proposition "God will hear prayer" is easier to our faith than that other alternative which is thrust upon us, "God will not hear prayer." Does any one hint that, through sin, the door of God's audience-room may be shut to us? But right over against the fact of sin is the fact of a Saviour, who is also our advocate with God. And in the Sermon of this Saviour we read, "Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray unto thy Father."

Prayer is a *preparation.* We should pray before going

out to the work of the day. Not only are the fresh morning hours best for this exercise, but they, in a sense, govern the day. Every one knows what it is to have days in which all things go wrong. Every one knows how in them things seem half possessed with the spirit of misrule; how nothing goes as it should, or is where it ought to be; how the things about us seem out of joint, and disaster, confusion, and discord come crowding in upon us on those "unlucky days." If we stop and think, it will be found that our nerves have been rasped or our feelings disturbed by something at the outset. Its hours were wrongly begun. We let something vex or irritate us in the morning, and the whole day went wrong. And there are other days when we are conquerors, when nothing can bring us down; when some joyous fact in the opening hours has prepared us to live in the sunshine and avoid the cloud. It is the testimony of devout men that the morning prayer in the closet has prepared them for the day's toil. In the commercial disasters of 1837, a merchant doing a vast business in New York, said, "I never dared on any one of those terrible days to go down town until I had got steadied and strengthened, and, in a measure, prepared for what might come, by a season of private prayer. Every day brought disasters. Nobody dared trust even his friend, hardly himself. I knew that some were tempted to save themselves and their families by putting aside and out of sight their property. When the pinch should come to me, I was afraid I might be left to do what was not honest and straightforward. It was a comfort and a preparation to put the whole matter in God's hands, and feel that striving to do just right He would not leave me. If compelled to fail, it was a comforting thought that I had in God and His love that which the world did not give and could not take. I could not have

lived through those frightful weeks if I had not clung to my morning prayer!' And the farmer was not so far from right who, terribly profane before his conversion, never dared enter the neighbouring city without his morning prayer for preservation from what had been his besetting sin. He had feared—and it had become to him a sort of nervous dread—that he might at some time, in an unguarded moment, let slip some word of profanity. Then neither he himself nor his fellow-men could any longer believe him to be a Christian. It was a test thing even before God, to him. Starting at an earlier hour than usual one morning, he omitted his customary petition. He remembered the fact just as he was entering the city. What should he do? Pray in thought, right there? But would he not be likely then to forget again, and so lose the habit, and so forfeit the protection of his God? Back he turned, and traversed the weary miles to his praying-place, and offered his prayer for preservation from what had been his besetting infirmity. Who, that knows what it is to be tempted strongly toward any one sin, will venture to blame him? If the Master needed to pray for Peter that his "faith fail not," shall one who is assailed by any temptation fail to make much of the prayer he daily lifts to heaven for daily strength?

And if no single sin assaults our weakness, there are a whole host of untoward influences that may overpower us. There is in every man's business or profession some peculiar exposure. His position, now in one way and now in another, tends to weaken his religious life. The present evil world gets hold of him. It makes itself the real world to him. It crowds out the higher world with its facts of duty and the rich doctrines of God's grace. And thus a man may think that there is something so unfortunate in his position that there is in it an absolute

hindrance to his best Christian living. He finds himself now and then in the midst of a day-dream, in which, far away from his present position, in some other land, in some other work, in some other Church, he is a very noble Christian, and doing very brave work in religion. But this is a mistake. God has sent him not in an ideal, but in an actual field. And there is nothing about his position that need hinder him, if he would only go out to his work through the closet of secret prayer. Cares and trials, the whole mob of daily annoyances that thicken about us, that dog our steps — these nameless perplexities of the outer life—they would be less dangerous were we better prepared, through prayer, to meet them.

"Lord, what a change within us one short hour
Spent in Thy presence will prevail to make,
What heavy burdens from our bosoms take,
What parched grounds refresh as with a shower!
We kneel, and all about us seems to lower;
We rise, and all, the distant and the near,
Stands forth in sunny outline, brave and clear.
We kneel, how weak! we rise, how full of power
Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong,
Or others, that we are not always strong;
That we are ever overborne with care,
Anxious and troubled, when with us is prayer,
And joy and strength and courage are with Thee?"

Prayer is also the dictate of gratitude. Life may have had its overhanging clouds, its falling rain, perhaps its rough tempest, with the bolt of blasting. But does any man suffer more than he deserves? Does any one suffer as did He who suffered in the garden and on the cross? Never is our life so dark as to have no tinge of brightness on the edge of the cloud. One there was who cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" that there never need be another soul to utter that cry. What-

ever has come or yet betides any man, here is at least a joy, that this is not an orphaned world. Every trial is a trial, not an accident. There is a living God when our eyes are too much swollen with weeping to see how He can be the loving God. There are times when we must get down to that rock, and stand firmly there. We say, and it is the first ray of light, that there is no accident, or chance, or fortune, or misfortune; but "the Lord reigneth." And is there not in that fact a comfort, nay, the beginning of gratitude and the return of joy? The world is not orphaned, and we are not fatherless. We come to thank God that there is a God, and that He is God. But the saddest life is not all sad. There are days of sunshine. The dial of a grateful heart marks many shining hours. If any man will sit down and count over his mercies, he will be amazed at the number. For the gift of natural life in such a world; for a mind to know and a heart to feel; for the best privileges of any land on which the sun ever shone; for the restraining grace that kept us from viler sins; for the dying Christ, the present salvation, the hope of heaven;—can any man go over, even with rapid and general glance, these things, and have no stirring of gratitude to God for them? And this gratitude must voice itself in prayer. A man who feels it must go and tell his God about it alone. A man not grateful enough to tell his benefactor of his thankfulness is not grateful at all. If a man is grateful, he will enter his closet sometimes on purpose to give vent to his grateful heart. There is, indeed, the prayer of penitence seeking pardon; the prayer of a man perplexed as to duty, and seeking guidance; the prayer of a mourner weeping at the feet of Christ. But the prayer now indicated is not agonizing, nor imploring, nor yet is it the *submission* that says, "Thy will be done." It is calm,

sweet, gentle prayer; the prayer that flows rather than strives; that prays itself out easily and naturally, because gratefully.

"One hour with Thee, my God, when night,
With solemn step and slow, climbs the high heaven,
And the sweet stars, unutterably bright,
Are shining forth upon the world below.
Oh, then afar from haunts of men I'll flee,
And spend one sacred hour, my God, with Thee;"

Prayer is also a *command.* How peculiar the words of our Lord, "*When thou prayest*, enter into thy closet!" It is implied that one will, of course, pray. This is a dictate of nature. It is an instinct. It is, like the belief in God, a natural belief, that prayer is to be offered and will be answered.

"Prayer is recognised by every form of religion that has existed in the world. The most degraded Hottentot prays to his Fetich, though it be no better than a stick of wood. The Hindoo, of whatever rank or caste, bows in adoration before his ugly idol. The polished Greeks and Romans, with purer taste, though with little better reason, offered their supplications in the presence of those sculptured forms of beauty and grandeur which embodied their highest conceptions of human excellence as deified and exalted to the skies. Homer represents prayers as Jove's daughters, lame, wrinkled, and slant-eyed—that is, feeble and deformed in themselves—but mighty as messengers between earth and heaven. Socrates rebukes those who did not look to God in prayer. A well-known infidel, in peril of shipwreck, called loudly on God to have mercy on him; and men who have denied the Divine existence, have been so oppressed by a felt want of the Divine teaching, that they have poured out their supplications into the blank and drear vacuity by which

they were surrounded." The whole literature of the world shows the instinct to be not only universal, but powerful. Even in common conversation how often we hear the phrase, from prayerless men and women, "I hope and pray" that this or that thing may be! The sense of the fitness of prayer for things earnestly desired is universal. And some who tell us that they have no habit of daily prayer, excuse themselves under the plea that their lives are a prayer! When we see this same transcendentalism leading men to act where they should eat, to use muscle where they should be taking food, then we shall be the more ready to accept acting as a substitute for praying. The excuse, useless as a reason for the neglect of actual prayer, is yet a testimony to the fact of duty felt. As if for ever to shut off all attempts to put any other duty in the place of prayer, or to put any other kind of prayer in the place of secret prayer, we are told expressly "to enter thy closet, and, when thou hast shut thy door, pray unto thy Father."

For one's own good this is to be done. There is a virtue of *godliness*. It is not to be confounded with other virtues. It is as distinct a thing as is honesty, or temperance, or kindness. Godliness is simply God-likeness. It is also a direct and positive feeling towards Him. It is the recognition of God, the feeling of love to God, of allegiance to God, of accountability to God, of delight in God. Godliness nourishes every other virtue. But it is neither composed of them, nor are they any substitute for it.

And this peculiar virtue and grace of character is learned nowhere else so well as in private prayer. God demands of us that solemn awe, that devout reverence, which befit us always, but are best exercised on our knees. Beneath God's eye—He on the throne, we kneeling at the

footstool—we learn how to adore Him. He demands our reverent praise. And prayer will sometimes be like a devout hymn of the heart. He demands that we offer petitions—petitions running over all the broad ground from "Give us our daily bread" to that which asks "Forgive us our sins." It may be that we shall tell God nothing new when we rehearse before Him the story of our wants. But He who has a father's heart requires it, perhaps to add to His own joy as He hears us, perhaps to add to our own joy as we come, childlike, to tell our Father. If it were certain that there were no answer, we as men, should still need to pray. But we must *believe* even in that case that answer does come. For, without that belief, no man could ever pray. And so, needing to pray, we have the right to the conviction that we trust no "lie made up in our nature," but a sure instinct, when we believe in God's *answer* to man's prayer. Prayer has, indeed, an influence on him who offers it. It collects his roving thoughts; it humbles him; it exalts him; it broadens his view; it does most of anything to work in a man this virtue of godliness. But this is not all, is not even the main thing, about prayer. *Prayer influences God.* Let no one hesitate as if there were irreverence here, as if this were making God subject to man. It is all of God's will, and not of man's will, that He hears prayer. If He shall choose to be influenced by man's prayer, is He unable to do so? Is He so circumscribed that He cannot allow man's prayer to be a power, if He wills that it shall be such? He of His own free will and good pleasure has elected that prayer shall be a potency, not because it is in itself powerful—for, by the very condition of prayer, it is not the power it asks for — but because He has provided for it, and inspires it, and has been pleased to ordain an answer to it. "Thy Father,

which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." He, then, who does not pray violates a command, annihilates a virtue, dwarfs his nature, and displeases his God. How vast a source of strength and consolation God has opened in prayer! We must use it, or we offend Him and injure ourselves.

And prayer is a power for our fellow-men. We are bound to do them all the good we can, in all the ways we can. No man who omits prayer, or who uses it negligently, can claim that he is doing all his duty to his fellow-men. The blessings the world has received in answer to Christians' prayers, it does not yet understand. There are, however, some who are feeling grateful for a father's or a mother's petitions. Many a straying soul has felt that he was followed everywhere by them, and, when the prodigal has returned, he has owned the debt under which those prayers have laid him. And what a field for doing good is here! We cannot, it may be, be eloquent men; but we can be praying men. Silver and gold we may not have to give to those who can be blessed thereby; but "such as we have"—and sometimes that is better for some impotent man at the Temple-gate than any gift of gold or silver—we can give in the currency of prayer. And having it to give, is it not the worst miserliness to withhold it? If prayer will do some things that can be done in no other way for men, shall those who have the heavenly throne as their resort, and the riches of God's promise as the reserve on which they can draw, withhold their prayer? What inhumanity—could we call it by any softer name?—if the power of miracle were ours, and we were commanded to use it as did Jesus in Galilean village and Judean city, and we would not do it! "If we saw an uninterrupted series of our fellow-men defiling in chains before our eyes, and then dropping one after the

other into a dungeon of unknown depth and hopeless gloom, and knew that petitions—earnest and importunate petitions alone — could break their chains and secure their deliverance, what heart so obdurate as not to join in those petitions? And where is our compassion, where our fellow-feeling for our fellow-men—to say nothing of our sympathy with God and Jesus Christ—if we do not offer up earnest and unceasing prayers for a whole race of human beings, the greater part of whom are bond-slaves of Satan, and are falling, one every second, into the dungeon of unending despair? Oh, that the eyes of Christians might be opened to see what inexhaustible resources are put into their hands, when they are permitted to pray for a spiritually diseased and dying world!"[1] Prayer brings down the Holy Spirit to human souls, so that they are enlightened, persuaded, converted, and saved. Prayer makes all other means effectual. It has power with Him who desires us to pray for men, that through our prayer He may give the blessing that He desires to bestow, but can bestow only after we pray.

Christians are *invited* to pray. Our Lord's language commands, and also it invites. It calls us to a choice banquet of rich privilege. He asks us to be *happy* in prayer. It is probable that more temptations address the desire for pleasure than any other principle in our nature. Satan storms our feelings. He appeals to our sense of vacancy, to the yearning of happiness. That in religion which meets this temptation is its address to the very same feeling. God outbids the world. The joy in religion is to be superior to that in sin. And so Christ invites us to prayer, as to a very feast of delight. Not long will true prayer be joyless. They who will set themselves to have their happiness in communion with God, shall find

[1] Prof. Tyler, Prize Essay on Prayer for Colleges.

His fruit sweet to the taste. And it must be so, for Christ gives no unmeaning invitations.

And is there any other religious exercise that can so increase in us the depth and power of religious emotion? The want of which not a few complain is want of fit feeling in the presence of the facts of religion. They mourn that they are not more moved by the great doctrines of the Bible. Prayer is the best medicine for this disease. If the great truths of religion do not affect us, if they do not stir us, it is because we have not prayed over them. Why, a truth that would thrill an angel to ecstasy may be believed by a man,—may be held as an undoubted thing by his intellect,—and yet it may be only a lump of ice upon his heart. But let this truth be taken into the closet and prayed over, and it will cast out a golden grapnel that shall seize the emotions and lift up the sunken soul very far heavenward.

The ore of the miner just as it comes from the mine is of little value. Ore as ore is almost useless: it is to be taken and worked over, fused in furnaces, and to be beaten and shaped into articles that are needed by man. Just so in religion. These great doctrines of revelation are like the ore that comes out of the black-throated mine. They must be fused by prayer, and then shaped into forms that can be employed in actual life. One may hear sermons, study the thick-volumed literature of Christian libraries, may be deeply versed in doctrinal knowledge, may be at home amid the scholarly volumes with which Christian exegetes have enriched the world; and yet, if one is not a praying man, all this ore of truth will be of little worth. If, instead of so much discussion of religious doctrines, we could take them more frequently to our closets, it would be better for the interests of truth, better for our own souls, and better for the world. There could

then be no complaint of insensibility; the liveliest interest would be felt, and the truths of the Gospel would be seen as the "power of God unto salvation" for the world.

> "O dull of heart! enclosed doth lie
> In each 'Come, Lord,' a 'Here am I.'
> Thy love, thy longing, are not thine,—
> Reflections of a love divine;
> The very prayer to thee was given,
> Itself a messenger from heaven."—TRENCH.

VII.

IN HIS RECREATIONS.

RECREATION NOT THE CESSATION OF CHRISTIAN WORK — CHRISTIAN VIEWS OF RECREATION — PRINCIPLES APPLIED —TENDENCIES CONSIDERED.

A CHRISTIAN must have his recreations. The bow must sometimes be unbent, or it will be spoiled. Mind and body alike demand it; and religion has no forbidding word, but only a hint of care and caution. For lack of some plain distinctions as to kind and manner of recreation, many a good man has fallen back in his religious life. He felt the need of a respite from toil, and he took the way of the world rather than that of the Christian in meeting the need, and he goes now a cripple on crutches to pay for his moral carelessness. On the other hand, the attempt to maintain one's self steadfast in one's duty, as if recreation were needless, as if recreation were a sin, as if it were in some sort the "coming down from one's great work," has been fruitful in evil. It has nourished a morbid piety. It is stern, as it should be, against all evil; but it lacks grace. Iron may be wrought, under the artist's hands, into forms of beauty, which, without impairing its firmness, shall minister also as a delight to the eye of the beholder. It is possible to "be steadfast," and yet have care for the things "that are lovely and of good report." That some have gone too

far is no reason for our failure to go far enough. That some take the world for their law of recreation, is no reason why we should not seek pure and healthful recreation within the limits of Christian decorum.

For, be it remembered, that the recreation we need is *not a cessation of Christian work.* From that, no man can take any vacation. There is no month or week or day, or even hour, in all the long year, in which a man is to seek relaxation from the bonds of Christian obligation. The kind of work may change. The mower is at work when he is whetting his scythe. The clergyman seeking health amid the solitudes of the mountains is serving God as really as in his pulpit. The weary merchant who unbends at the evening hour, and romps on the carpet with his children at home, is not only preparing himself the better for to-morrow's business, but for to-morrow's devotion. For are not devotion and business and recreation all parts of the one great work,—the service of God? When a Christian takes his recreation, he does not go down to the world. If worldly men do some of the same things, they come up to him : he does not descend to them. The acts may be the same ; but the spirit and aim is another, even in recreations. I am not called to put aside any duty of religion, because I seek my full night's rest ; because, weary of the noise of the street, I seek the quiet of home ; because, the season of prayer ended, I enjoy the flow of social wit or the charms of another's conversation ; because my duty to my fellow-man discharged an hour ago, as I strove to lead his heart to the knowledge of Christ, I now in the concert-hall enjoy another hour with the great masters of music and song. There is duty in the recreation ; and there is recreation in the duty. The duty guides as to the kind and amount of the recreation. And the recreation is all

the more refreshing because not a stolen pleasure, but one in the line of duty.

There are also many recreations once esteemed hurtful that are coming to be regarded with more favour by Christians. But who shall say that they were not once hurtful? The associations connected with some forms of recreation have entirely changed. The influences that surround some pleasures may be wholly unlike those of a former generation. What, too, if now and then good men were a little narrow in their view? Is the inference therefore to be drawn that we are to take up all the world's gaieties, and use them with a Christian use? By no means. Some of them cannot be so used. All the past history of some forms of worldly amusement shows that their tendency is steadily downward. There may have been sometimes narrowness among Christians. But it must not be forgotten that what is called by worldly men narrow, is, from our higher point of view, not narrowness but *breadth*. Our horizon is wider than that of worldly men. We see more truly the influences of an act. It is to be more carefully pondered. We cannot rush upon it thoughtlessly. The wishes of the world, the wishes of our own partially sanctified souls, are not our law. We have certain touchstones. We have principles to apply before we decide. That Christians are a little slow in such things is for their praise: they are weighing tendencies; they are marking results. Some things the great sanctified common sense of good men has allowed, some other things have been just as distinctly rejected, and some things are yet upon probation. It is true that right or wrong, in things commanded in the Scriptures, does not depend upon parallels of latitude or the succession of generations. But in the broad realm of "permitted *things*," time and place are both to be consulted. A man

not yet an old man relates his first reproof from the lips of a venerable deacon in the Church. He was a boy-convert,—an unusual circumstance in that rural neighbourhood at that day. The morning after he had united with the Church, he took part in a game of ball on the village green, to the great scandal not only of those who were watchful for scandal, but of nearly all the community. It was certain that the other boys of the school looked upon it as a yielding of his religious profession. And hence the wise reproof of the deacon, as he urged some form of exercise in which the convert's act would not be misunderstood. It was not narrowness, but breadth, in the reprover. But to-day, in our changed circumstances, the boy-convert might need to be advised to do that very act which was inexpedient fifty years ago. To refuse the game on the score of religion would, to-day, be the cause of scandal, and make religion a reproach.

When a party of Christian gentlemen were almost the only visitors at a certain seaboard resort, they used the nine-pin alley every day. They found pleasure and profit in the exercise. But when, on the succeeding week, a roystering party, far outnumbering them, came to the same hotel, and spent hours at the alley, using the games for gambling, they were in danger of being misunderstood; and so these Christian men wisely held that what was "lawful was not expedient." The worldly party called them hypocrites, declaring that they would do privately and by themselves what they would not do before others. But there was anything but hypocrisy in the case of those Christian gentlemen. They were elsewhere brave enough to do right, as were not the roystering and worldly party. And they were brave enough to deny themselves a "permitted pleasure" when the act would have been esteemed a dishonour to their profession of

piety. And when one of them, determined that none should call him a hypocrite, after the usual talk about "not caring for Mrs. Grundy," went back to the alley, it was only to listen to terms of coarser profanity, coined freshly to wound his ear, and to learn afterwards how thoroughly he was despised. And here is found the reason why some games, like that just named, are proscribed at one time and place, and elsewhere, and at other times commended. The student at one college was expelled for practising the very gymnastics that are prescribed in the curriculum of another. And rightly; for the associations in the one case were demoralising, in the other they were healthy and pure. Nor in the adoption of such gymnastics is the claim just that the world has gained on the Church. The thing is morally different even when physically the same. What is claimed by a loose worldliness is one thing, and what is permitted by broader Christian views is quite another.

And there are amusements to which a Christian's attention is sometimes asked, where he is, in Mr. Bushnell's words,[1] "free to use but too free to need them." But the broad, unqualified statement of this principle is certainly unfortunate; its range of application is very narrow, applying only to things clearly permissible, but never to things which are doubtful; never to things where the principle of Christian expediency comes in. Nor does it take any notice of what will or will not please Christ; of what will or will not help one's own moral development; of what will or will not be of benefit to other men. It is edge without breadth. It is the happy turn of a saying, but not the statement of a far-reaching principle. It may have a meaning for the

[1] Bushnell's "Sermons on Living Subjects," page 375. From the text in 1 Cor. x. 27: "If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, *and ye be disposed to go*, whatsoever is set before you eat."

special case in hand,—the going to a particular feast,—but the statement as a principle of what was true in a single instance, the adoption of the phrase, "if ye be disposed to go," as a *rule of duty*, it is too obviously unsafe to need refutation. In the realm of the *conscience*, when revelation is wanting, a man "is a law unto himself." For the law of duty to God was written once on man's nature, though now the handwriting is sadly marred and battered. But it was all the law he had, and in that sense he was a "law unto himself." But, even in the realm of conscience, revelation is needed to recut the letters of the half-effaced law on the tablets which have been thrown down and broken; to retrace in deeper lines the old handwriting of God. But when any man shall go down into the human heart, among its deeper passions and prejudices, and utter there the doctrine of a "man a law unto himself," he is putting the crown that belongs on the head of the Eternal Lawgiver upon fallible man; he is lifting mortal wish into the dignity of a divine law, and giving to human license a boon that God has never yet given to Christian liberty.

And our recreations, as a part of our Christian living, come in under the principles which were discussed in a former part of this essay,—the principles that run through the entire New Testament.

In our recreations we are to ask always whether this thing will *please Christ*. If we can know—and, with a good degree of certainty, a devout and studious Christian can know it—what will please Him, what He would have done had He been here with our mission to fulfil; if we can discern "the mind of Christ," then we have a principle that will never fail us. For is not the Christian to reproduce in our altered circumstances the life of Christ? And is it not certain that He is near?

"But warm, sweet, tender even yet
A present help is He.
And faith still has its Olivet;
And love its Galilee.

"The healing of His seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain:
We touch Him in life's throng and press,
And we are whole again.

"To Thee our full humanity,
Its joys and pains belong;
We bring our varied gifts to Thee,
And Thou rejectest none."[1]

Some would ask about duties, "What would Christ have done?" but it seems a degradation to their idea of Christ to think of Him as caring about our *recreations*. But let us suppose that His mission was so unlike ours that in His earthly work He felt no need of such seasons of rest, would it follow that we do not need them, and that He would not condescend to order them for us? True, we have not many instances of such periods on record in the history of His life. Some have said that it is not on record that He ever laughed. No more is it on record that He practised the usual daily ablutions, or cared for the decencies of apparel. It is not on record that His head was covered from the sun or the rain. And the list of things not mentioned about Him as a man would fill pages. What then? Will any man reason that these ordinary acts of manhood were not done by Him, and should not be by us?

But is it quite so clear that He whose weariness of body is expressly recorded did not need and did not take periods of rest, of relaxation from severer duties? See Him in those wondrous word-pictures of the Evangelists,

[1] Whittier.

as He goes out, in the evenings, after His toilsome days, to the Bethany home. He craves rest, sympathy, the refreshing that comes from intercourse with other souls. And just here He is teaching us *the value of home* as a recreation.

Some one has said that there are "no homes in America." That saying, if not quite true, is too near the truth in many instances. God instituted the family, and the family craves a home. That home is to be the great centre of recreation. Its comforts, conveniences, pleasant appointments, are to invite every member of the household to pass most of his leisure hours within its happy doors. Especially must the younger members be made to love the household, to find their comforts and spend the most of their evenings there. Is it said that only large wealth, or at least an abundance beyond that which most can hope to gain, are, in that case, needed to adorn and enrich one's home? No, we say, not wealth nor even a competence is needed. The plain farmer, the plain mechanic, can put, occasionally, a good book on the centre-table; can take an instructive paper or magazine; can hang a few prints or chromos on his walls; can get some sort of a musical instrument; can provide a few simple implements for drawing, if any of the younger members of the family have tastes that way,—in short, he can so arrange as to be much within doors himself in the leisure evening hours, and to make the *household happy at home.* If it be said that to provide all these things costs money, the quick reply is that they do not cost so much as do the recreations outside of home. Either at home or outside of it, the younger members of a household will have their recreations. Theatres, billiards, late suppers, and all that class of things, cost. Better pay heavily for other things at home than for those! Nor

think that one can be excused from giving himself, his own presence, his personal attention, to that which is to interest the household. Father and mother interested, the children will be; the young people will be. We must keep in with the young, in order to keep young ourselves, and so be able to guide them. It is harder to give this personal presence than anything else. Lodges, clubs, social and political gatherings, all are taking time and energy that are needed for home duty and home recreation. If parents are often out, the young people of the family will be; and there is no sadder sign than to see one go for his recreations very much away from home. Something is wrong where there is the wish to wander. If the crying sin of the age is the neglect of family training, is not the reason to be found in the fact that the duty of making home happy is not enough understood and practised? What resources of amusement in the household, what games of skill without chance, what plays that move to mirth, what encounters of wit, what discussion of current themes, what stores of pleasure in volumes of travel, in poem, in well-chosen fiction and biography, in neighbourly conversation with intelligent callers of like sympathies and aims. Home is the first and last and best source of recreation. The Master had His Nazareth home; and when compelled to make a new home at Capernaum, He chose the house of Peter; and, in His last days, He left the Temple each evening for the home of Lazarus and the Bethany sisters. He consecrated home life. He made it a sweeter thing. Who can doubt but that as far as possible He threw off a portion of His heavy load; that, the taunt of Pharisee and the sneer of Sadducee heard no more, He unbent in these households, and spoke words of kindly, brotherly, cheerful sympathy?

We find Him also at the Cana marriage. He is indeed a peculiar guest. But He helps out the host in the embarrassment of the occasion, and the beginning of His miracles is the sanctification of social life. He adds to the happiness as well as rouses the reverent wonder of the guests. He is no enthusiast railing at social pleasure, and urging the solitude of a hermit's cell to those who would be holy. God is the author of the family, and Jesus the Son honours His Father's institution. Did He see in it a shelter, a guidance; a source of the needed social recreation; a place where, under the sanctions alike of human and divine love we might first be happy in God, and next be happy through the sanctified use of every part of this wondrous nature with which God has endowed us? Our Lord honoured home. He would have us do the same. For home has uses infinitely above those of mere shelter and rest and sustenance. Here our moral and social wants are to find largely their direction, their culture, and often their supply. Household piety, the training for this world and for that to come, the pure healthful pleasures that give us nerve and tone for the severer tasks—all these are in God's plan of home. And on them all rests the tender, loving benediction of our Lord.

Nor can we forget that, in our recreations, we are under the law of a Christian self-regard. We owe a duty to ourselves. We must do ourselves no harm in this thing. Recreation must never come to be our business in life. We have no right to look upon duty as drudgery and recreation as the only joy.

God has mercifully ordained the night for rest. It is His plan that each day's weariness shall be taken out of a man by the following night's rest. Some will not do this. They crowd seven days' labour into six, and are so

weary that they give the Sabbath to merely bodily rest,—the rest that should have been taken on the six previous nights. So that God's two great institutions—the night for physical rest, and the Sabbath for the rest of mind and soul—are both perverted. Then comes the need of a month's respite in summer, in which one strives to "get rested," as the saying is; strives to make up for the robbery of sleep and the robbery of Sabbaths during the previous eleven months. What is God's plan? It is this: a day's work, and its weariness taken away by a full night's rest; a Sabbath, and its hours relieved of secular thought as well as secular labours, and used in another way; the mind and heart dedicated to another class of inquiries and pursuits; refreshed by a new course of reflection and feeling, so that the man is in a sense to be *re-created*. For the idea of recreation is not the cessation of all thought and care; but the employment of our mental powers in some new line, the breaking of the chain of ordinary business and care by another kind of business and care.

It is marvellous to mark how attention to the matter of sound sleep in its full measure has to do with the vigour of one's powers. Your men who are thoroughly wide-awake men are the men who will have their sleep. And your well-preserved men—the men that keep younger than their years—are men who are regular and persistent in this thing. And when to this habit there is joined that of careful Sabbath observance, when worldly care is broken by the new duties and thoughts and feelings of the Lord's Day, when the pulse of worldly solicitude is calmed and steadied by the full use of the opportunities of public worship and private devotion, the man's "profiting will appear to all." Then the summer vacation will not need to be used for sleep, to make amends for the dissipations

of overwork; but its days will be glad, exulting days, that are brimful and overrunning with healthful exhilaration,—body, mind, and soul all throbbing with life.

And how many an amusement that men crave is condemned by the very fact that it is unnatural and destructive of bodily health! It carries with it late hours, the eating of richest food at unusual times. How many a recreation is far too costly in what it requires as its accessories! It damages one part even when it benefits another part of our nature.

And the further principle—*i.e.*, that of *doing good to others*—is not to be forgotten in our recreations. One of the great objects of a Christian's life,—he is to have it either directly or indirectly in mind in his hours of relaxation.

Out into the world of society he must sometimes go. Home is, indeed, first. And less often than many think do they need to go beyond it. Yet sometimes we must meet men in society. There are society men and society women. They have that gift and grace and aptness of speech, that charm and magnetism of manner, those peculiar endowments, that fit them to guide and sway the social circle, where their presence is always welcome. Thousands of persons have set themselves to the careful culture of their gifts, that they may, in this way, gain power over their fellow-men. And a Christian should strive to be influential in this thing. Let him "covet the best gifts." For he is not to seek human applause, but human welfare. He can talk for Christ. When not speaking on themes directly religious, his speech can be "seasoned with salt;" the "savour of Christ" may be in it, whatever the topic.

It is plain that a Christian cannot be present at those amusements where the world *gives the law*. There are some diversions managed by worldly men as worldly men.

And though they crave the presence of the Christian as a sanction for what is to their own minds questionable, he can never go into such things without dishonouring "the name by which he is called." They know that religion demands a difference, and they understand that this difference should come out in the life. They know that the choice of a man's pleasures determines his character. They know that some pleasures are just worldly pleasures, not recreations, save in name. The world gives the law of them, and religious words would be out of place while enjoying them. It is simply and clearly inconsistent for any man with a high object, such as the Christian professes to have, to take an interest in those things. He damages his influence thereby. He is on an enemy's ground. And he is there, not as a soldier to fight, but as a lukewarm friend to parley with the foe. "It would be easy to argue by the hour in favour of parties of pleasure, and theatres, and ball-rooms, and all the vanity of fashionable life. But since the beginning of the world, no professed Christian ever dreamed that he was imitating the example of Jesus Christ, or honouring the Christian religion, at a theatre, a ball-room, or a splendid party of pleasure. And equally clear would be the decision in reference to a multitude of pleasures which it is needless to specify. If these things were favourable to the designs of the Founder of Christianity, they might, they should, have been enjoined. But how singular would have been such directions in the New Testament! How marvellous would appear such a command, when placed beside those which enjoin prayer, spirituality, humility, and self-denial!"[1] In doing these things one does not please Christ, nor help his own development, nor do others good. No man goes into these things for any such end. He passes by a thousand

[1] Albert Barnes.

sources of genuine, healthful Christian recreation, for the sake of getting at those pleasures which are of the world, which never have been and never can be consecrated by any religious using of them.

And in the whole matter of amusement we are to watch *tendencies.* To what will this or that thing *naturally* lead? "There are sports and exercises which, abstractedly considered, appear fair and plausible, but which, when considered in their tendencies and ultimate issues, are perilous to the highest interest of the soul. And surely these, as well as open and flagrant violation of positive Divine injunction, ought to be scrupulously avoided. If, for instance, games which do not necessarily require money-stakes in the family, but which would tend to such in other association where money hazards are common,—and especially if great proficiency in playing were attained by practice in youth,—then to admit and encourage such, involves tremendous responsibility. If concerts and shows produce tastes likely afterward to seek indulgence in operas and theatres, such ought, undoubtedly, to be avoided. And if dancing, however graceful in youth, leads to gaiety of worldly associations and life, it ought not to be encouraged in family education and training. Whatever may be advanced in professed philosophy on such pastimes and exercises, they are so dangerous in their possible consequence that they are to be shunned and not indulged. Wisdom subscribes to the saying that it is better to keep far away from danger than advance toward it. In Mr. Wesley's words, it is not wise to try how much poison can be eaten without being killed. And whatever endangers the future morals and religion of the young ought to be prohibited."

It was the testimony of James Brainerd Taylor that recreations, rightly managed, helped rather than hindered

his spiritual life. Many can testify to a similar experience. If recreations did not do this that were fatal to them; for they could not then be allowed. But pleasing to Christ when rightly used, helpful to one's whole being, and beneficial to us in our ministrations unto other souls, we enter upon them not with any hesitating step, as if letting down the dignity of the Christian life, but heartily doing these and all other things, as in the sight of the Lord. Thus our recreations become not a worldly bait, but a Christian benefit. They are not outside our duty, but a part of it, and so we are the happier in them. They are not an end, but only a means. And on them, as heartily as on the more direct services of religious duty, we can crave the blessing of God.

VIII.

THE CHRISTIAN IN HIS BUSINESS.

HIS DUTY TO SUCCEED—RELIGION A HELP AND NOT A HINDRANCE—BUSINESS RIGHT IN KIND AND DEGREE—CHRISTIAN HONOUR—THE GAINS OF BUSINESS—MONEY HAS A FIXED MORAL VALUE—PRINCIPLES APPLIED—THE SPIRITUAL USE OF WORLDLY THINGS—IRRADIATION.

"OF what did he die?" asked Alexander, when some one told him of a friend's death. "Of having nothing to do," was the answer. "But," replied the great conqueror, "that is enough to kill even a general." A Christian must have something to do; he is to add to the wealth or skill or learning of the world. He has no discharge from this war during his earthly life. He may not be a drone in the human hive. Eden's curse was not work, but work "in sorrow." When the sorrow is taken out of one's heart by the divine grace his work may be his joy, and in doing it he may best serve his God. When a certain New England merchant waited on his pastor to tell him of his earnest desire to engage in work more distinctively religious, the pastor heard him kindly. The merchant said, "My heart is so full of love to God and to man that I want to spend all my time in talking with men about these things." "No," said the pastor, "go back to your store, and be a Christian over your counter. Sell goods for Christ, and let it be seen that a man can

be a Christian in trade." Years afterwards the merchant rejoiced that he had followed the advice, and the pastor rejoiced also in a broad-hearted and open-handed brother in his Church, who was awake not only to home interests, but to those great enterprises of philanthropy and learning which are the honour of our age. The merchant is dead; but the great society, with a national reputation, and the college, sending forth yearly its class of trained young men, both of which received his noble benefactions, are still feeling the result of the wise advice of the pastor and the wise decision of the merchant.

A Christian *ought to be a success in life.* He is to strive earnestly to succeed in worldly things; he is to secure property if he can; he is to get fame if he can; he is to acquire learning if he can. In some way he ought to be a success. Not that worldly success is a final aim, but it is to be an aim. In it and through it one is to do good; and this success is to be legitimate. There are short cuts to wealth. There is the course taken by the man who says, "I will be rich any way;" and "any way" with him means the nearest way of wrong. If a man sets out to be wealthy, and is shrewd, he can generally do it in one of two methods. There is the short cut of fraud, of trickery, of dishonesty, in which one is careful to cover all his tracks and keep just outside the clutches of the law. Such a man quickly distances the men whom he calls fogies. He succeeds; but the wealth slips quick, and with it goes his character, his manliness, his self-respect. The other way is longer round. It takes years to get over the course; but when a man has got there he has made an achievement, and he knows that it is not through luck, but through work, with the blessing of God upon it. And in the horrible haste to be rich which has seized like a very epidemic on so many in our time, a man who can

come up honestly, and by integrity win his way to a recognized success, is doing the world a vast service. For, in spite of hundreds of instances to the contrary, there is a sentiment abroad that all the shrewdness belongs to rascals, and that all success comes by devices and by tactics that are really different in nothing from wickedness. It is surprising to find how among the great middle classes of society—ranking now for a moment by one of the most common and worst ways of ranking, that of money—what a feeling is engendered towards the more wealthy. It is almost always taken for granted that a rich man who has made his money in trade has done so unjustly. But the feeling is all a mistake. No doubt men have become rich through fraud; but have not thousands become poor through fraud? Is not wrong-doing the cause of the large part of the poverty of the world? Shall we therefore call all poor men fraudulent? But that would be as unreasonable as to call all rich men dishonest. And yet, since the impression so widely prevails, one great need of our times is men who will enter into business, and go up and on to competency and even to wealth, and do it with such evident Christian honesty as to confound the slander that wealth comes only by fraud as against the rich, and by oppression as against the poor.

As with success in securing wealth, so with other forms of thrift in life. A distinguished naturalist, asked why he had not secured more property, replied, "I have never had time to make money." It is perhaps nearer the truth to say that there are men whose ambition is in another line—a line measured not by length of bank-book. There are men who, not despising money nor holding those who make it as especially worldly and unspiritual, have another standard. An honest fame is their

ambition. Here, too, there are low demagogue tricks, base means of gaining place and power. But the positions of honour and trust have a legitimate attraction. And if one can take them and honour God in them, and be as simple and prayerful and devoted in them as out of them, then one may be able to show the world that religion can grace any station, and that a servant of Christ can honour a position more than any position can honour him. The world wants *men that can be trusted.* It is in danger of losing faith in the power of human nature to withstand the corruptions that assail those who are in conspicuous places. It is in danger of thinking that piety is a very pretty thing for a child; a very excellent thing for people in poverty; for those who are so low down as to have no earthly comfort; for people on very wretched sick beds; for cripples; for the blind and palsied; and for all manner of unsuccessful souls. The world needs to see that piety is not only the best of consolations, but the most thrifty of all things; that it becomes a man anywhere; that it always makes him the more a man; that there is nothing low-spirited and mean about it, but that everywhere it tends to honour and success.

It is needed, however, that we have some care as to the way in which we use that word *success.* There are souls to whom it is given to succeed only by failure. Their plans of wealth, honour, learning, have miscarried. They are poor and without name in the world. Are they, therefore, failures? By no means. Taking the earthly failure with the right spirit, and using it as moral capital, they have laid up far more treasure in heaven and gained immortal honour on the books of God,—those books to be opened so soon.

A Christian is to go into business that he may take off the reproach that care for the other world injures a man

for this world. What a strange idea this which makes men think there is something contaminating in worldly things! How utterly have such souls misunderstood what the Bible says about unworldliness! It is the world's misuse that the Bible so sharply condemns — a misuse so common as to colour the language of the Bible; a misuse that we are to abate and banish as soon as possible by a better Christian living. A man go out of business because a Christian! That is the very reason why he should stay in business and consecrate it and transfigure it. Through that business the higher glory is to shine. It can all be done for Christ.

This is true, of course, only of honest business. There are kinds of employment that are in conflict with even the semblance of religion. A man's work must be for the supply of some honest want among men. It must be a natural want, a healthful want. His business must be one that really adds to the comfort of the world. He may deal in things that the stomach craves or that the eye craves. Articles for the parlour or person, since they gratify the taste for beauty, are just as really a supply for an honest want as coal and flour. There is a use of the beautiful as well as the needful. God made not only the corn that waves on the plain, but the lily that blooms in the valley; and both are equally for man's use. But any business that ministers mainly to evil passion, that is a violation of the great law, "Do to others as ye would that they should do to you," has a brand upon it—a brand that shows it set apart unto Satan. And about that business a Christian is commanded, "Touch not, taste not, handle not."

Right in kind, one's business must be right in method. It does not avail to say that a questionable thing is done by all engaged in a given business or profession. When

the hatter brands his hat "Paris," or the watchmaker puts "Geneva" on his American watch, it is not enough to plead that it deceives nobody. Why the foreign branding, if it is not intended to commend goods under false pretences? Why say the cloth is German when made in America? and why cover the statement with the mental explanation that it is made in the same way and is of equal quality with the imported article? And in all the methods of advertising one's wares, and the mode of raising money to meet one's liabilities, in the taking care of one's paper and the keeping of one's word of mouth inviolable in business transactions, a Christian is to be above reproach. One of the most difficult things to define in business life is that word *honourable*. And yet it is a definite thing that men mean when they use that word. It is not only doing justly, but doing it with a certain delicacy and interior sense of what the right really is. It is the fairness of trade. If a man knows what honour is, he will need no definition of it. If he does not know it, no definition can tell him. Honour is demanded both of employer and of *employé*. It ought not to be true that a band of workmen must be watched to get them to give an honest day's work. It ought not to be true that a Christian is ever a time-server. There is honest work which a man covenants to give another for a definite price. Slighted work is not honest work, even when covered with veneer and varnish. But if the work requires veneer and varnish, let the veneer and the varnish be put on faithfully. Honour belongs to the hand-toiler as well as to the brain-toiler: to the man before the counter as well as to the man behind it. No man can hope to do business without competition; and in nothing is there more danger of looking upon others as *unfair* and as lacking in honour than when two men are

competitors in the same line of business. The tendency to misrepresent another's goods and unduly to praise one's own; to charge him with unfairness if in any one point he succeeds better than ourselves, is very strong. In what is termed business life there are two prime factors—faculty and capital. Says another: "It is honourable to lay out at fair interest the capital which is yours. It is precisely as honourable to use to the last item of value the faculty which nature has committed to your charge. If you see the gleam of a gold vein where I saw only clay, the reward is justly yours; if you know the ground where corn will grow better than I, your sheaves must be more numerous than mine; if you have stronger sinew and more perseverance, and choose to toil more hours in the westering sun after I have unyoked my team, you must lay a wider field under seed than I. And no manly feeling will permit me to accuse you when you work your faculties to the utmost: the pearls are for him that dives, the golden apples for him that can climb. A man who expects less from his competitors than an unsparing use of all their means is a coward; a man who aims at having more than the full use of his own is a churl."

And into business a Christian ought to go that he may use the *profits of trade* for the interests of religion. Our land has had its merchant princes who have felt that business, not only in its method but in its gain, was for Christian ends. There are noble names on the roll-call of the dead—names of merchants, lawyers, bankers, who *did business for Christ.* N. R. Cobb, Garrat N. Bleecker, Norman Smith, Richard Fletcher, are well known; and their example has incited many of the living. Plain farmers—quiet men who had read the Bible and the newspaper—have come forward; and seeing that seed-

corn is sure, when planted, to bring the harvest, have furnished colleges and seminaries with ample financial endowment, and we are beholding everywhere the fruitage. And bankers and merchants are coming to feel the Christian obligations of wealth, and are doing their duty. They are endowing chairs in our institutions of learning; they are seeing to it that our great enterprises at home and abroad in such things as buildings, as professorships, and as scholarships, are not allowed to suffer. They are using wealth for Christ. And thus a beginning has been made. For after all it is only a beginning. And let our men of wealth learn that not only does God require this thing at their hands, but men also expect them to be leaders in philanthropy. The house one builds with large wealth may perish; the children who inherit money without having learned that great lesson, the "value of a dollar," may be injured by what they receive. But if a man shall wisely invest in the departments of philanthropy and of Christian education, he will be the gainer himself, and he will bless his fellow-men and honour his God.

Nor must it be forgotten that this is the era of secularism in education. Over the sea the war is boldly proclaimed. Science is to be taught irreligiously, with no recognition of anything higher than man, and with nothing higher in man than his body. The same feeling is at work in our own land. It pleads for an education that is not Christian in its tone. It is true that the institutions of learning which have been established on any other than a Christian basis, in order to anything like success, have been obliged to get about the peculiar conditions imposed by their founders as best they could. The experiment will, however, be continued. Perhaps religion will not encounter absolute and direct hostility. *It will rather* be quietly ignored by a vast class of educa-

tors. But the moral and religious bearing of all studies—save, perhaps, that of the pure mathematics—is a thing which we, as Christians, cannot consent to see ignored. We must have institutions of learning where the *tone*—the most important thing about any institution — shall be healthy and Christian. And in these days, when it is getting to be common for worldly men to spend money in endowments in aid of secular education, the Christian merchants and bankers of this land have a work to do. They must be awake and liberal. Endowments everywhere are needed. Education is coming to be eleemosynary. No graduate of Dartmouth or Harvard or Brown pays anything like what it costs to give him his education. Every student is more or less of a beneficiary. Christian education is expensive. It can hardly be expected that those less favoured with wealth will do much in this direction. Here the appeal is to those broad-minded enough to see and open-handed enough to give, where giving will *do the most good.* For the men in our higher institutions are to be, as a rule, the leaders of opinion. They are to shape the religious thought of coming generations.

But we must not overlook the fact that there are open to every man, though the world may not call him rich, the broad avenues of benevolent enterprise. The truth is, that noble as is the gift of *some* who have wealth, the great mass of benevolent contributions in our land comes from the large middle class of the Christian community. They support mainly our Churches ; they make the larger contribution to missions ; they feel quickest and respond noblest, in proportion to their ability, to the calls that come to us on almost every Sabbath and on almost every other day as well. It is coming to be seen that *money has a moral value:* that there is a direct proportion between the wise expenditure of so many dollars and so

much good done to men ; that so much cash sends so many missionaries ; builds so many churches or chapels ; prints and distributes so many books ; and brings, taking a given number of years together, about so much moral advance to the cause of Christ. The moral value of money is getting to be an estimated thing as well as its commercial worth ; and no Christian is exempted from a share in this Christian commerce. Christian fellowship is simply a divine partnership unto this end. Let no man dream what he would do had he wealth. The poor man can exercise himself in benevolence as well as the rich. Every man may consecrate business gains—all of them—to God, and then take what part of them is needed for personal and for family wants. It is all God's property, and that only is to be spent on ourselves which He allows and will approve. The motto of the Redemptionists is, "All for Thee, O Lord ;" and of the Jesuits, "For the greater glory of God." The final end is not "to make money" or "save money" or "lay by money," but to "use money for Christ." Business is not to be pursued as something distinct from "serving God." The pew and the counting-room are alike to be consecrated. When the Karen convert was presented, just before leaving America, with fifty dollars, some one asked him what articles he would buy. In broken English he replied, "This no me money ; this Jesus Christ's money." Gain is not ours. It is His who gave the faculty, guided the judgment, kept firm the health, and blessed the endeavour. Above all, it belongs to Him who "bought us with a price."

In determining our duty when in business we are to make honest application of the three great "principles" which have been named elsewhere ; namely, *pleasing Christ, doing the best for self*, and *doing good to others*.

What would the Master have done? How thrilling the thought! We can put Him, in imagination, in our place—in just our situation. We know that He has used the tools of honest work. He was reputed to be the "carpenter's son." And by being among us, one of us, and doing work in His earlier years, and by taking His part in the family toil, He honoured labour; so that it is no irreverence for the busiest toiler to ask what Christ would have done had our mission been laid on Him. Think of Him as by our side, nay, in our place. We may fill up the outline for ourselves. When we ask what, now and here, about our plans, will please Him, we see life anew. It is a very precious thing to translate His life into new forms,—to keep the spirit while we change the language into such a dialect that we shall be "epistles known and read of all men." There is much said in our day of *consecration.* It is held by many to touch mainly the *will-power;* and this power cannot, of course, be excepted. But by many the term is plainly used in the sense of zealous purpose. It is man's act. It is the forcing one's self up and on and into a proposed state. Is not Paul's word better when he says, "the love of Christ *constraineth* us"? that is, His love to us seizes upon us, takes us up, transports us out of ourselves, and so we are thinking, feeling, acting for Him. It is not merely a fervid emotion. It is not an ecstatic state at all. It is the calm putting of Christ's thought in place of ours. He was too much in earnest to be frenzied, fevered, boisterous. The water ran too deep and steady; it had too much volume and power to be noisy. He was in earnest. But it was not the earnestness that exhausts itself in words, to be followed presently by a reaction. Oh, what life was His! How steadily He kept the end in view! His "Father's business,"—how thoroughly it was done

while mingling with men! When shall we see those who call themselves Christians forgetting to talk so much about "my business" and talking more about "my Father's business"? When shall we see them desirous, above all things to finish the work God has given them to do!

And as in His earlier so in His later days, the Master would teach the same consecration. There was a disciple who had denied Him publicly. He comes to that disciple with a question which conveys a reproof both in itself and its threefold asking. The disciple had been so surprised at the turn things had taken that he had forgotten his vows so earnestly made. And before this man can come back to his old allegiance he must be brought again to the place where it will be a joy to *please Christ*. Our Lord was faithful to this man Peter. His sin had been no small one. The head man of the apostolic band, the spokesman of his brethren, the most officious, the quickest to take vows of fidelity upon his lips, he had sadly failed. It is not Christlike to pass over sin. It is not a trifle, and is not to be set aside as a light thing. God did not so regard it when His threats leaped forth like indignant lightnings against it; nor did our Lord so regard it when He hung on the cross bearing our sins. It is the mark of superficiality in religion, of shallow experience, sometimes of terrible error in vital doctrine, to treat sin lightly. Our Lord did not do it with Peter. He did not say it was a blemish and of little account; a mere mistake, a pardonable weakness that love can easily overlook. Our religion is a holy religion; our God a holy God; our Saviour a holy Christ; and holiness condemns always all sin. Our Lord pressed the threefold denial of Peter upon him; and He did it in the most effectual way. A set speech of reproof would have roused Peter's im-

pulsive soul and loosened his rash tongne. And so, without saying a word about the denial, He makes Peter think about it and condemn himself for it. No needless pain does our Lord ever inflict. But sin must be seen as sin; and the Great Physician will probe to the very bottom of the wound. He is faithful enough to give pain where a man ought to be pained. In His earlier life our Lord reproved with a gentle reproof the mother who wanted her boy to do something that was not his "Father's business;" and here, among His last days on earth, He is faithful in putting the sin of His erring disciple directly before him. And *we* are not only to own sin where we have failed to be Christlike, but are to go further. We are to get over on the other side; are to take part *against ourselves;* are to look at it through Christ's eyes; are to use His infinitely perfect scales of judgment, even if we be found altogether wanting. When applying the rule, "What would Christ have done?" we may be condemned. But is it not a joy that we have such a rule? Is it not also a joy if, both when we are alone with our own souls and when we are out with our fellow-men, we find ourselves striving to know and do the "mind of Christ"?

Our Lord craves love. This same Peter was asked three times, "Lovest thou me?" The heart of Christ spoke out there, It mattered not that Peter's love at best was a little thing compared with Christ's great love to him. It matters not now that any human heart holds, when full, but a drop compared with that ocean. It is a human heart that Christ wants. Nor is it for the luxury of love that He would have Peter's affection. There is a reappointment to service. "Feed my lambs, my sheep." Does the sense of failure ever overpower one? Dees one sometimes feel that having made attempts towards discipleship, he has sadly failed right at the point where he

thought himself strongest; that it is almost useless to try any more? So felt Peter. He had forfeited confidence. Could he ever open his lips again? Must he not write his life down as a failure? Would it not be wiser for him and better for the cause if he should take henceforth the back seat, the lower room; if he should keep out of sight, doing only the most humble work? Perhaps it would be better that he should do no work at all. But see; the Master makes out anew his commission to his old work. He meets the humility of the newly-ordained disciple—the feeling of Peter that to be allowed to do anywhere the *least* work would be a great favour—by saying, "feed my *lambs*." And Peter, willing to do this,—this, the lowest errand-boy work, that suits only a child's capacity—is told next that he may not only "feed" but "keep my *sheep*." And wherever any soul is smarting under the sense of defeat; wherever out in the world and before men Christ has been denied by word or deed, the Master meets the penitent man with His pardoning grace and appoints him anew to his work.

And in business, the principle elsewhere laid down, of doing *one's duty to one's self*, has room for daily application. In the world of trade you are touching and being touched. You meet hundreds of men, each of these persons having his peculiarity. There is a going out of self to each one. It is as if you were a hundred men to touch each of these hundred souls. You give and take. They add to your life and take from it; you get impressions from them as they from you; you build a segment from each of these lives into your own; you are the larger in some way for every human face you see, for every tone of human voice you hear, for every unveiled soul as its thought and feeling become known to you. What if *some of these* souls are evil? Then you have all the

better chance to improve in that fine scorn and hate of all wrong which is the characteristic of the true gentleman, so that you make other men's vices contribute to your virtues. You can build the better for your knowledge of their mistakes. And in this self-building, this acquirement of character, is there not through business life an opportunity to see and know men of very rich and lovely disposition,—persons whom it is worth our while to be like? How many virtues, not ours now, can we see as we meet men face to face and deal with them in the commerce of daily life! Unless we are sadly inflated with an absurd self-importance we shall see many a model grace in others that we sadly lack ourselves. And when there comes the temptation to try some trick of trade, to get some unfair advantage, to do the plausible wrong, "just once and no more," there will be help for resistance, not only in the thought of the faulty stone which we have seen others put into their edifice for their shame, but we shall also be helped by the remembrance that every well-hewn and well-placed block will add to the beauty and the strength of the structure we are building. For we are not rearing our structure where few can see it, but where men are building side by side, and where we are taking models daily from their work as well as they from ours.

And so there comes in also that other prineiple of *regard for others*, elsewhere named. In business we touch them. For their good as well as for our own we are under the appointment of life. In "making money" the *man* we deal with is the largest consideration. What does he get of good, of right, of truth, of happiness from us? What mark are we leaving on him; and, in these circumstances what avenues of usefulness open themselves before us? What opportunities for letting him into a

better knowledge of what Christianity really is? He may have been unfortunate in the specimens of Christianity that he has met. They may have awakened his prejudice. He is illogically saying "they are all like that," or, "there is no reality in religion." Just as illogically will he be likely to say good things of all Christians; that Christianity is certainly true, if he sees your consistent walk as a Christian in your business life. He may draw strange inferences from conduct; but, knowing that he will draw them, we are to give him no just occasion to draw the inference against the truth. And there are fair-minded men who ought, indeed, to read the Bible, but who do not; they read instead the lives of Christians. It would be better if they would take the written Word; but they insist on the narrower line of reading the Christian life they see. But on that narrow line they will deal fairly. Should we object? Did not the Lord lay down the rule, "By their fruits ye shall know them"? And it is too late in the day of the world's progress to doubt the relation between cause and result. That which makes men better men say is good; that which does not they say is either impotent or evil. 'In business life men are seen without their gloves; they have thrown off the Sunday dress and the society manners; they are most truly themselves; we get nearest the core; we touch them vitally, and they feel us as a power when we are Christians in common life and amid the scenes of trade.

But in and through all his business the Christian is also to maintain the spiritual outlook. He must keep the *spiritual mind* on the farm, at the shop, or the store, or the office. How? By looking on his business as God's appointment. That old English word "calling" is a good word. It carries in it the idea that each man is divinely appointed to a certain form of business; he has "a call"

to it. Many a man would pray earnestly about what to do in life, if he had the faintest idea that he were "called to the ministry." But when it is a choice between becoming a merchant or a mechanic, between being a mason or a carpenter, he esteems it a matter too trivial for prayer, and leaves it to any "opening" to decide what he will do. And yet a man's whole success in life may depend on his decision. No; a man's business is his *calling*. He is adapted to it; takes to it; presses it; serves God in it; and feels, if he feels rightly, that he is as really called to it as any minister to his pulpit or missionary to his foreign field. What if, in another field, somebody, no more shrewd than he, has made more money? One's own business that one has learned to know, the practice of which is one's joy, one's "calling," the man feels is better for him than anything else. And there is such a thing as spiritual guidance. God, if sought, will guide one's taste and judgment and show him in what position he can do the most good. And when one's work is found, a man can put his own personality into it. It is *his* business because of *God's* wish and will. God works with him and he with God. There is worship in his work.

And a man is to use things temporal so that they shall *remind* him of things spiritual. What a fund of imagery there is in these outward things! Think of how Jesus used them. No recondite and learned comparisons from far-off scenes and dimly-known history; no studied figures; but all common things, such as men met in their daily toil, He used for spiritual teaching. And thus every thing had not only its common but its religious meaning to Him. The bread men ate, the wheat from which it was made, the good soil on which it grew, the sowing and the reaping, and the gathering into the barns,—all

these things, which are only *things* to an unspiritual man, were full of rich spiritual imagery to Christ, and they should be to every Christian. The water we drink and with which we lave our bodies; the clothing we wear; the iron, the wood, the very hay and stubble we see; the outlook on morning mist or evening cloud, the sunny or the lowery day, every object that touches any bodily sense, is suggestive of spiritual things. And thus the plea that worldly things of necessity shut out heavenly things, is so far from being true that, if it were not for the one, we could say very little of the other. These are the alphabet, the vowels, and consonants that, rightly used, translate higher thoughts into language which render spiritual utterances clear and intelligent.

And there must also be seen in worldly things the irradiation, the shining through of the great verities of the spiritual world. Those are the sure, substantial things. These only endure for a time, and they get their meaning almost wholly from what of the higher, broader, spiritual world there is seen in and through them. Seen alone, they are of little worth; they perish with the using. The things that are seen are temporal; the things that are not seen are eternal. The object-glass in a telescope is, indeed, a study; it is worth our careful notice; it is skilfully ground and placed with greatest care in the long dark tube. Nobody may call it worthless. But, after all, who thinks very much about *it* when looking *through* it at the bright stars that bespatter the firmamental blue? The glass is for bringing the far-off star "near at hand." This world is never well used except as men see it in the light of another. Spiritual things are near, real, potent. They overlap these of time. They shine through them and give them meaning. Used alone these temporal things *are never to be*; used apart from the great spiritual facts.

of redemption, of probation under the gospel, of eternal consequences, these temporal things are harmful; used apart from the duties of the Christian life they are a mistake and a mischief; they may be for the soul's undoing. But used as God's Word would have us do, used so that a man is "not slothful in business," but is "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord," it is not only possible for a man to be a Christian in trade, but to use trade so as to "lay up treasure in heaven." And so our earthly and heavenly life is one in spirit, and death is no break. So one lives right on and into heaven. So one lights up the shining way of the Christian life, and leaves for a moment the door ajar as he enters the further glory.

This is the kind of broad-minded, stout-hearted piety the Church needs and the world needs. It is the style and type of religion that best declare the Master's glory; it has the stamp of His hand upon it.

Vainly had the pupils of a celebrated teacher attempted to copy a certain picture. Into it the master had introduced a feature of drawing and colouring that was peculiarly his own. They brought their pictures one after the other, a new picture each day for inspection, and the class declared them to be failures. Only one remained to be shown on the following morning. It was the work of the dullest, but yet of the most industrious and faithful, pupil in the class. He had dreaded the ordeal. The painting had been hung the evening before in the exhibition-room, and a curtain thrown over it as usual. During the night, all alone, the master had lifted for a moment the curtain. He had drawn *one line*,—no more; given one touch and left it. Assembled in the morning with the others, the painstaking student was prepared to hear the laughter of the class. But when the veil was lifted, amazed at the sight, their eyes fixed on the one line, they

cried out, "*The master, the master!*" None but he could have drawn that line. It will be our highest glory, if, after striving to be "Christians in the world," on that great day when the veil is lifted, men shall see the task completed, and shout their praise as they behold the crowning work of the Master.

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